

LONDON- WEST MIDLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Volume 5 | Technical Appendices

CFA23 | Balsall Common and Hampton-in-Arden
Baseline report (CH-001-023)
Cultural heritage

November 2013

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Department
for Transport

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1 Introduction

1.1 Structure of the cultural heritage appendices

1.1.1 The cultural heritage appendices for the Balsall Common and Hampton-in-Arden area (CFA23) comprise:

- baseline reports (this appendix);
- a gazetteer of heritage assets (Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-023);
- impact assessment (Volume 5: Appendix CH-003-023); and
- survey reports (Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-023).

1.1.2 Maps referred to throughout the cultural heritage appendices and are contained in the Volume 5 cultural heritage map book.

1.2 Content and scope

1.2.1 This baseline provides part of the evidence base, along with Appendices CH-002-023, Appendix CH-003-023 and Appendix CH-004-023 against which the assessment of assets that may be affected by the Proposed Scheme can be determined. It collates information about known and potential heritage assets from a variety of sources and presents a chronological description and discussion of the development of the study area, placing assets within their historical and archaeological context.

1.2.2 The baseline is structured as follows:

- Section 1 provides introductory material relating to the scope of the assessment, study area and key data sources;
- Section 2 provides background info on geology and topography;
- Section 3 provides a chronological description of the archaeological and historical development of the area;
- Section 4 provides an overview of the built heritage resource;
- Section 5 relates to a map regression;
- Section 6 provides a description of the historic landscape, including parks, gardens and important hedgerows;
- Section 7 describes the archaeological character of the route. This is closely related to Appendix CH-003-023;
- Section 8 provides an overview of archaeological understanding and potential; and
- Section 9 provides information sources.

1.3 Study area

- 1.3.1 The Balsall Common and Hampton-in-Arden area lies within Warwickshire and the West Midlands and comprises parts of the civil parishes of Hampton-in-Arden, Balsall and Berkswell.
- 1.3.2 All non-designated and designated assets within the land required temporarily and permanently for the construction of the Proposed Scheme and within 500m of it have been detailed in this baseline assessment. In addition, designated heritage assets have been examined up to 2km either side of the boundary of land required for construction.
- 1.3.3 All identified assets are listed in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-023 and shown on Volume 5: Maps CH-01-151b to CH-01-153 and CH-02-151 to CH-02-152.

1.4 Data sources

- 1.4.1 Sources examined as part of this baseline assessment include published secondary sources, cartographic sources, historic environment record (HER) data for undesignated heritage assets and English Heritage national heritage list (NHL) data for designated assets. A full list of published sources can be found in Section 9 of this appendix.

1.5 Surveys undertaken

- 1.5.1 The following surveys were undertaken as part of the EIA process:
- Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) survey of the majority of the Proposed Scheme and land around it (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-023);
 - hyperspectral survey of the majority of the land around the Proposed Scheme (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-023);
 - a programme of non-intrusive surveys including geophysical prospection (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-023); and
 - site reconnaissance field inspections to review the setting of historic assets and the character and form of the historic landscape.

2 Geology, topography and landform

2.1 Landscape and topography

2.1.1 The study area is located within the 'Meriden Gap', a predominantly rural area between Coventry and Solihull, which mainly comprises the River Blythe valley and a tributary east of Balsall Common. It extends from Berkswell (north-west of B4101 Waste Lane), at its southern boundary, to Hampton-in-Arden (south-east of the A45 Coventry Road), at its northern boundary. The study area includes land within the parishes of Berkswell, Balsall Common, Hampton-in-Arden and Great Packington.

2.1.2 Between Balsall Common and Hampton-in-Arden is the floodplain of the River Blythe, and it is here that fertile soils provide ideal agricultural land. The floodplain lies at 85-90m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and is extended by a number of small tributary valleys. The highest ground is a ridge located between Balsall Common and the western edge of Coventry, which rises to approximately 130m AOD and extends to the west at a slightly lower level to the south of Balsall Common. From this higher ground, a tributary of the River Blythe flows north-west between Balsall Common and Berkswell through gently-sloping terrain mainly below 100m AOD. This and other small tributaries join the main floodplain of the River Blythe in the vicinity of Hampton-in-Arden. To the north of Hampton-in-Arden, the land rises to 95m AOD to the west of Mouldings Green Farm, and again to 100m AOD at Diddington Hill. These two areas of higher ground are separated by the valley of Shadow Brook.

2.2 Geology

2.2.1 Within the study area and to the east of the Meriden Fault, the solid geology comprises the upper strata of the Carboniferous Warwickshire Group including the Tile Hill Mudstone Formation, which consists of mudstone and laminated siltstone with thin beds of sandstone and occasional conglomerate. The Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation occurs associated with the western boundary fault of the Warwickshire Coalfield. It typically comprises very weak poorly-cemented sandstone, with some subordinate beds of silty and sandy mudstone. The Mercia Mudstone Group is present (beneath superficial deposits in many places) to the west of the Meriden Fault. Within the Mercia Mudstone sequence, a thicker horizon of interbedded sandstone, siltstone and mudstone, known as the Arden Sandstone Member, outcrops.

2.2.2 This solid geology is overlain by a continuous cover of glacial deposits and alluvial superficial deposits. Most of the glacial deposits comprise sands and gravels, which form an extensive but now dissected deposit beneath the axis of the River Blythe valley. Fluvial and alluvial deposits have the potential to mask archaeological deposits and to over-ly deposits of palaeo-environmental interest. Such deposits are present across the lower parts of the river and stream valleys.

2.2.3 Local areas of 'made ground' are noted within the study area, associated with surface mineral extraction and also the construction of the Rugby to Birmingham line and the A452 Kenilworth Road. Thus, providing evidence of industrial activity within the area.

2.3 Boreholes

- 2.3.1 A review was undertaken of historic boreholes and historic land use within the study area, with regard to the potential for survival of palaeo-environmental remains, in particular within alluvial deposits at the valley bottom.

Palaeo-environmental potential

- 2.3.2 No boreholes were identified with palaeo-environmental potential within the study area; however, analysis of geological mapping has confirmed alluvium in a number of locations, as follows:
- valley bottom adjacent to Beechwood Farm accommodation underpass;
 - valley bottom at Balsall Common viaduct;
 - valley bottom at Marsh Farm viaduct;
 - valley bottom at River Blythe Bypass culvert;
 - valley bottom at River Blythe viaduct; and
 - valley bottom at Shadow Brook underbridge.
- 2.3.3 These locations are considered to have potential for the presence of palaeo-environmental evidence.

2.4 Historic land use

- 2.4.1 Ground disturbance has been recorded throughout the study area from both historic land use and previous archaeological investigation, which has resulted in areas of negligible palaeo-environmental and archaeological potential.
- 2.4.2 Historic activity, which is derived from land quality data (see Volume 5: Appendix LQ-01-023), notes 10 landfill sites, two brickworks, one quarry (currently in use) and two pit sites within the study area considered for this assessment. These historic sites are recorded at Balsall Common, Berkswell, Hampton-in-Arden, Meriden and Bickenhill, and are presented in Table 1.

- 2.4.3 Numerous archaeological investigations have been undertaken within the study area. At Park Farm, Berkswell, 20 archaeological trial trenches identified only modern boundary/drainage features¹. At Meriden Quarry, a programme of archaeological fieldwork identified and recorded prehistoric activity^{2 3 4}. At Patrick Farm, Meriden, an evaluation was undertaken⁵. Within the medieval village at Fentham Hall, Marsh Lane, two trenches were excavated, but only found post-medieval agricultural remains⁶.

Table 1: Historic landfill and pit sites within the study area shown on maps LQ - 01-050b/051/052

Site Details	Size (ha)	National Grid Reference (site centred)
Balsall Common:		
Landfill - Benton Green Lane	0.3	E425700, N278600
Landfill - Balsall Street	0.2	E421400, N276900
Berkswell:		
Landfill - Duggins Lane, Berkswell	1	E426500, N277600
Quarry (in use) - Berkswell Quarry	N/A	E422400, N280800
Hampton-in-Arden:		
Landfill (two) - Bradnocks Marsh Lane	1.4; 1.1	E422100, N278900; E422400, N278700
Landfill - Lincoln Farm Café	1.6	E421800, N280100
Landfill - Shadowbrook Lane	0.1	E419100, N281700
Gravel pit - Bradnocks Marsh	N/A	E422344, N279258
Pit - Berkswell B	N/A	E421800, N280500
Meriden:		
Quarry/landfill - Meriden Quarry, Cornets End Lane	44.1	E423200, N281300
Landfill - Somer Lane	7.2	E422500, N281900

1 Cullen, K., (2007), *Archaeological Evaluation of the initial working area, and areas 1 and 2*, Cotswold Archaeology.

2 Griffin, S., Jones, L., Pearson, E. and Woodiwiss, S., (2000), *Evaluation at Meriden Quarry, Solihull*, Worcestershire County Council, Archaeological Service reports.

3 Lang, N. and Instone, E., (1988), *Fieldwork at the Somers, Meriden*, Archaeological Service reports.

4 Stevens, C., (2002), *Meriden Quarry, Solihull: Excavation of a Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement, 2001.*, Northamptonshire Archaeology.

5 Kenyon, D., (1999b), *Patrick Farm, Meriden, Metropolitan Borough of Solihull: Cultural Heritage Assessment*, Cotswold Archaeological Trust.

6 Thompson, P., (2003), *Archaeological Evaluation at Fentham Hall, Marsh Lane, Hampton-in-Arden, Solihull.*, Warwickshire Museum Field Services, Report No. 0349

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Site Details	Size (ha)	National Grid Reference (site centred)
Bickenhill:		
Brickworks/landfill - Jacksons Brickworks, Coventry Road	37	E420600, N282500
Brickworks - Arden Brickworks	N/A	E420500, N282600
Landfill - Castle Hills Farm, Catherine De Barnes Lane	5	E418200, N281700

3 Archaeological and historical background

3.1 Early prehistory

- 3.1.1 To the south-east of the study area is Waverley Wood Farm Pit, near Bubbenhall. Whilst it lies 10km away, it is one of the earliest archaeological sites in the country and is significant in understanding the early prehistory of the area. It is broadly contemporary with a few other select sites, such as Boxgrove, West Sussex and High Lodge, Suffolk. Quarry workers have found teeth and bones of the straight-tusked elephant (*Palaeoloxodon antiquus*)⁷ and four handaxes, three of which were made of andesite⁸. A salvage excavation followed these finds and confirmed, together with the mammalian evidence and stratigraphic sequences, the site dated to a pre-Anglian age - from c.781,000 to 478,000 years ago. This site, therefore, forms part of the evidence for the earliest colonisation in Britain by human ancestors⁹.
- 3.1.2 Within the study area, early prehistoric activity is largely evidenced through artefact finds, such as stone axes, flint arrowheads and pottery from sand and gravel quarries, and from within river terraces¹⁰.
- 3.1.3 800m east of the study area, lies Meriden Quarry, Somers Lane, and it is here that continued occupation from the early to late prehistoric periods has been found. Although it lies outside the study area, as like Waverley Wood Farm Pit, it is significant in understanding the early occupation of the area.
- 3.1.4 At Meriden Quarry, a programme of archaeological investigation in 2000/01 recorded Neolithic flints and two concentric rings of post holes of early Bronze Age date, with an associated pit group (BHA161). In the southern part of the site, an Iron Age polygonal enclosure (BHA150) with double-opposed entrances was identified. Within the enclosure, three further ring ditches were located and interpreted as contemporary house structures. It is suggested that the settlement was abandoned prior to the Roman invasion^{2 4 11 12}. Flint artefacts, including a barbed and tanged arrowhead, have also been recorded at Barston and Berkswell.

7 Shotton, F. W.; Keen, D. H.; Coope, G. R.; Currant, A. P.; Gibbard, P. L.; Aalto, M.; Peglar, S. M. and Robinson, J. K., (1993), *Pleistocene Deposits of Waverley Wood Farm Pit, Warwickshire, England*. Journal of Quaternary Science 8, 293-325.

8 Shotton, F. W. and Wymer, J. J., (1989), *Handaxes of Andesitic Tuff from Beneath the Standard Wolston Succession in Warwickshire, 1-7*. Lithics 10.

9 Roberts, M. B.; Gamble, C. S. and Bridgland, D. R., (1995), *The Earliest Occupation of Europe: The British Isles* in Roebroeks, W and van Kolfschoten, T. (eds.) *The Earliest Occupation of Europe, 165-192*, Leiden, Institute of Prehistory.

10 Buteux, S.T.E. and Lang, A.T.O., (2002), *Lost but not forgotten: the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic occupation of the West Midlands*, West Midlands Regional Research Framework for Archaeology, Seminar 1.

11 Palmer, S.C., (2002), *An Archaeological Resource Assessment for the Middle Bronze Age to Iron Age in Warwickshire and Solihull*, West Midlands Regional Research Framework for Archaeology, Seminar 2.

12 Woodall, J., (1990), *The Book of Greater Solihull*, Barracuda Books Ltd.

3.2 Later prehistory

- 3.2.1 Bronze Age sites are most often represented by funerary monuments¹³ but, in contrast, settlement sites have proved elusive¹⁴. At the Meriden Quarry site, a group of urns and accessory vessels dating to the early Bronze Age were recorded within 15 pits and post holes. Forming a rough circular/oval shape, the pits also contained large quantities of burnt clay, with one containing a number of struck flint flakes. Stevens⁴ noted that whilst these vessels are generally associated with funerary activity, no human remains were recorded.
- 3.2.2 Further Bronze Age activity is evidenced by a looped Palstave axe retrieved at Berkswell and burnt mounds located directly east of the Meriden Quarry site. Burnt mounds are piles of heated fragmented stone and charcoal that are believed to have been used to heat water, however, additional materials have also been found within the mounds, such as pottery, animal and human bone^{15 16 17}. Whilst rare in England, thousands are known in Ireland, where they are located along low-lying river valleys and their tributaries; it is thought that burnt mounds in England were situated in similar locations¹⁸. It has been suggested that these mounds may represent indicators of domestic settlement being located close-by on higher, drier ground¹⁶.
- 3.2.3 In the Iron Age period, the study area lay at the junction of three Iron Age tribal groups – the Corieltauvi to the east, the Cornovii to the north-west and the Dobunni to the south-west¹⁹. There are no certain nucleated settlements of this period within the study area. However, within the Meriden Quarry site an Iron Age polygonal enclosure (BHA150) with double-opposed entrances was located, but the little pottery recovered was largely dated to the late Iron Age period²⁰.
- 3.2.4 The significance of these prehistoric assets and findspots is the evidence they provide for activity in the study area during these periods. The prehistoric period is under-represented in the archaeological record within the study area and these few assets indicate that human activity was occurring and highlights the potential for further recovery of evidence in similar locations topographically and geologically.

13 Garwood, P., (2011), *The Earlier Prehistory of the West Midlands*, 9-99, in Watt, S. (ed) *The Archaeology of the West Midlands, A Framework for Research*. Oxbow.

14 Hurst, D., (2011), *Middle Bronze Age to Iron Age: A Research Assessment Overview and Agenda*, 101-126, in Watt, S. (ed) *The Archaeology of the West Midlands, A Framework for Research*. Oxbow.

15 Bradley, R., (2005), *Ritual and Domestic Life in Prehistoric Europe*. Routledge.

16 Hodder, M., (2004), *Birmingham the Hidden History*. Tempus.

17 Hodder, M., (2002), *Burnt mounds and beyond: the later prehistory of Birmingham and the Black Country*. West Midlands Regional Research Framework for Archaeology, Seminar 2.

18 Ehrenberg, M.R., (1991), *Some Aspects of the Distribution of Burnt Mounds*, 41-58, in Hodder, M.A. and Barfield, L.H. (eds), (1991), *Burnt Mounds and Hot Stone Technology*. Papers from the Second International Burnt Mound Conference Sandwell, 12th-14th October 1990, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.

19 Esmonde Cleary, S., (2011), *The Romano-British Period: An Assessment*, 127-147, in Watt, S. (ed) *The Archaeology of the West Midlands, A Framework for Research*. Oxbow

20 Northants Archaeology, (1998), *Excavation of an Iron Age settlement at Coton Park, Rugby, Warwickshire, 1998 interim report*. Northants County Council.

3.3 Romano-British AD 43-410

- 3.3.1 The study area is located within an area that was bound by Ryknild Street, the Salt Way and the two military roads, Watling Street and the Fosse Way. Watling Street lies to the north and was one of the most important Roman military highways in Britain. It ran from Richborough on the Kentish coast in a westerly direction, through Mancetter to the legionary fortresses in north Wales²¹. To the west is Ryknild (Icknield) Street, which linked Metchley Roman Fort (now centred on Vincent Drive, Edgbaston) with Alcester to the south, and Wall and Watling Street to the north²². To the south is the highway known as the Salt Way after the main export from the Roman settlement at Salinae (Droitwich Spa). To the east is Fosse Way, a military highway that linked two legionary fortresses in Devon and Lincolnshire²³.
- 3.3.2 Directly north of the study area is the Romano-British fortified town of Mancetter and its vexillation fortress – a smaller fortress thought to provide winter quarters for half-legions and possibly to provide accommodation for a number of brigaded auxiliary units during AD43²⁴. To the south was the Romano-British town of Alcester, located beside Ryknild Street in a loop of the River Arrow to the west of its confluence with the River Alne. Other minor settlements included Venonis (High Cross) to the north-east and Tiddington to the south²⁵.
- 3.3.3 Military activity is noted by the Roman fort 'The Lunt' (Baginton, Coventry), which was in use from AD60-64 to the mid-3rd century, and the Roman fort and settlement of Metchley. The Metchley site is occupied by two 1st century campaign forts - originally a large fort, 200 x 200m (4 hectares) built AD 50/60s, which was later replaced by a smaller fort in AD 60-80s²⁶. Jones²⁷ noted five distinct phases of the Metchley forts from AD 40/50s to the post-Roman period, which demonstrated extensive demilitarisation of the West Midlands during the 2nd century. Directly west of the fort, a settlement known as a vicus was located – a vicus is a settlement of civilian tradesmen, their associated workshops, dwellings and families who would have provided services to the Roman troops.
- 3.3.4 No Romano-British activity is known within the study area; however, it is possible that as-yet undiscovered remains dating from this period may exist.

21 Roman Forts and Camps: Letocetvm, Wall, Staffordshire; <http://www.roman-britain.org/places/letocetum.htm>; accessed: 18.07.13

22 Margary, I., (1973), *Roman Roads in Britain*, third edition. Baker.

23 Roman Frontier Systems in Britain, The Fosse Way Frontier; <http://www.roman-britain.org/frontier-fosse-way.htm>; accessed 18.07.13

24 Wilson, P., (2011), *Introduction to Heritage Assets: Roman Forts and Fortresses*. English Heritage.

25 Roman Fort and Romano-British Town: Alcester, Warwickshire; <http://www.roman-britain.org/places/alcester.htm>; accessed: 26.06.13

26 Roman Forts and Settlement: Metchley, Birmingham; <http://www.roman-britain.org/places/metchley.htm>; accessed: 25.10.12

27 Jones, A, (2004), *Roman Birmingham 2, Metchley Roman Forts, Excavation 1998 – 2000 & 2002, The Eastern & Southern Annexes and Other Investigations* in Birmingham & Warwickshire Archaeological Society Transactions for 2004, Volume 108.

3.4 Early medieval 410-1066

- 3.4.1 In the early medieval period, kingdom boundaries are seen to correspond with late Iron Age land divisions. A frontier zone was seen across the central Avon valley (directly south-east of the study area), which possibly represented the eastern boundary of the Dobunni and later formed the eastern boundary of the kingdom of the Hwicce²⁸. The Hwicce kingdom extended over present Worcestershire (except its north-western extension), western Warwickshire and all of Gloucestershire, except the Forest of Dean²⁹.
- 3.4.2 Within the study area, early medieval settlement is demonstrated by place-name evidence. Balsall means 'Baell(i)'s nook of land/small valley'; Berkswell means 'Be(o)rcol's spring/stream'; Barston means 'Beorhtstan's farm/settlement'; Hampton-in-Arden means 'high farm/settlement in the forest of Arden'; Solihull means 'muddy or pig-sty hill'^{30 31 32 33} and Alspath (Meriden) means 'Aelle's path across the heath'³⁴.
- 3.4.3 During this period, Berkswell is believed to have been a centre of religious activity. This is evidenced by the survival of a spring fed ashlar-lined basin/tank (BHA94) located below the early medieval church (now St. John the Baptist's Church), and it is here that pilgrims held open-air baptisms³².
- 3.4.4 Along the boundary of the Hwiccan kingdom, woodland was dense and formed part of the continuous wooded belt that stretched across much of the lowland of Britain, forming a natural boundary between north and south^{29 35}. Within the early medieval period, woodland was recognised as a valued economic asset. Woods were used for seasonal pasture for pigs, cattle, horses and sheep and the extent of the woodlands was clearly documented in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles²⁹.
- 3.4.5 The early medieval period is one of the least visible archaeologically³⁶; however, there is some evidence of activity within the locality. A silvered bronze early medieval mount was found 200m south-west of Molands Bridge, Meriden, and a silver coin was retrieved in Hampton-in-Arden. Hampton-in-Arden originated from this period, when a church and hamlet were founded on the summit of a hill above the River Blythe³⁵. These assets therefore have evidential value in the knowledge they provide of this under-represented period.

²⁸ Changing Landscapes; <http://timetrail.warwickshire.gov.uk/toolkitview.aspx?tid=2&page=30>; accessed: 18.07.13

²⁹ Hooke, D., (1998), *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England*. Leicester Uni Press.

³⁰ Ekwall, E., (1960), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*. Clarendon Press.

³¹ Mills, D., (2011), *A Dictionary of British Place-Names*. OUP Oxford.

³² Slater, T. R., (1981), *A History of Warwickshire*. Phillimore.

³³ Watts, V., (2011), *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names*. Cambridge Uni Press.

³⁴ Agutter, D.M.K., (1990), *Meriden: its People and Houses, Part 1*. Alspath.

³⁵ Watkin, R. and Bryant, M. (2006) *Hampton-in-Arden, a Village History*. Brewin Books Ltd

³⁶ Hooke, D., (2011), *The Post-Roman and the Early Medieval Periods in the West Midlands: a potential archaeological agenda, 149-172*, in Watt, S. (ed) *The Archaeology of the West Midlands, A Framework for Research*. Oxbow.

3.5 Medieval 1066-1540

- 3.5.1 The Domesday Survey of 1086 states there were 13 manors within what is now known as Solihull. This included Berkswell (Berchewelle, BHA066), Barston (Bercestone / Bertanestone), Hampton (-in-Arden) and Meriden (Alspath). With the exception of Hampton (-in-Arden) manor, the remaining population was small. Hampton (-in-Arden) had several outlying settlements, including Diddington (BHA211) and Balsall, which later became settlements in their own right¹². Prior to the development and growth of Balsall Common, references to Balsall generally refer to Temple Balsall, previously a much more significant settlement than the quiet hamlet of today³⁷.
- 3.5.2 In the 12th century, the manor of Balsall was granted to the Knights Templar and became the site of a preceptory of the order. By c.1290, they had built the church of St. Mary. The church remains in Balsall today and was subject to substantial restoration in 1846 by Sir. Gilbert Scott after which in 1863, it became the parish church³⁸. The Knights Templar was a religious order founded in Jerusalem in 1118, following a call to arms from the Pope. They were dedicated to the protection of pilgrims and defence of the Holy Land. Many noble men joined the Templars, but for those who were unable, land and valuables were often donated. Gifts of land were then immediately used for farming, which generated additional wealth for the order³⁹. Over time, the Templars became extremely wealthy and powerful. In 1307, however, the order met its demise when Philip IV, King of France, had the Templars arrested. They were officially dissolved by Pope Clement V five years later³⁸.
- 3.5.3 In 1324 the manor of Balsall was taken over by the Knights Hospitaller. Members of the order were both monks and knights who took monastic vows that included the protection of sick pilgrims to the Holy Land. As with the Templars, the Hospitallers (recognised by a black surcoat with a white cross) acquired vast wealth. By the 15th century, Balsall became absorbed into the manor of Hampton-in-Arden³⁸.
- 3.5.4 Hampton (-in-Arden) appears in the Domesday Survey as 'Hantone' but it was also known as 'Ardene'⁴⁰. It was located in an isolated small clearing, on top of a steep hill, with the River Blythe below^{41 35}. The village is recorded to have had 10 hides (approximately 486ha), a church, mill and woods extending three leagues (approximately 7.2km) long and three leagues wide^{40 42}. A church has been recorded in the manor since the early medieval period, but the present church of St. Mary and St. Bartholomew dates from about 1130.

37 Balsall Common history; <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/localhistory/16314.htm>; accessed: 18.07.13

38 Salzman, L.F. (ed), (1947), *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 4: Hemlingford Hundred*. Victoria County History.

39 The Grand Priory of Knights Templar in England and Wales; <http://www.knight-templar.org.uk/History/history.htm.html>; accessed: 22.07.13

40 Morris, J. (ed), (1976), *Domesday Book: 23 Warwickshire*. Phillimore.

41 Cave, L.F., (1976), *Warwickshire Villages*. Robert Hale and Company.

42 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, (1987), *Hampton-in-Arden Village Study*.

- 3.5.5 Within the churchyard of St. Mary and St. Bartholomew, a medieval stone cross (scheduled monument and Grade II structure (BHA186)), is located. This cross has seen few modern additions and alterations, with the majority of the original fabric remaining. It is set upon a plinth with an octagonal socket stone, with the shaft remaining to a height of 0.69m. The socket stone of this cross is enhanced by the decorated panels that have been carved into each face of the octagon, each bearing quatrefoil mouldings shield in the centre of five of the panels.
- 3.5.6 Churchyard crosses were erected to mark a starting point or a station during outdoor processions, particularly on Palm Sunday. Some crosses were also linked to particular saints, whose support and protection their presence would have helped to invoke. They also had a function as boundary markers for property and parishes. The associations with old church customs meant that many crosses were destroyed or damaged during and following the Reformation. However, this cross and a further one at St. John the Baptist's Church, Berkswell, remains in its original position, focused on the adjacent church and surrounding medieval settlement.
- 3.5.7 The medieval stone cross (scheduled monument and Grade II structure (BHA096), within the St. John the Baptist's churchyard, is located to the south-east of the church and is a good survival, with the original octagonal stepped base with octagonal socket stone intact. The stone shaft and cross head are modern additions dating from when the monument was restored in 1984. The cross stands over 2m in height and is believed to be in its original position.
- 3.5.8 From the middle of the 12th century, Hampton (-in-Arden) was owned by the de Arden family, passing by marriage to the de Montford family, of Coleshill, and then reverted to the Crown. It was granted to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, by Queen Elizabeth I in 1570 but reverted to the Crown after his death. By the early 19th century the manor was sold to Isaac William Lillingston who later sold the manor to Sir Robert Peel (former Prime Minister and founder of the modern police force), who then left it to his son, Sir Fredrick Peel. It was Sir Fredrick who then 'modernised' the manor, where many medieval structures were demolished⁴².
- 3.5.9 The old village of Hampton (-in-Arden) lay along the main street running down the steep hill, from the church towards the park-horse bridge (BHA144), which was built in the 15th century, over the River Blythe. This scheduled monument and grade II* structure carried Marsh Lane from Hampton-in-Arden to Berkswell over the river. An earlier medieval stone cross base had been built into the bridge as one of the supporting piers and was inscribed with the initials 'H B'. This served as a boundary stone between Hampton and Berkswell. The bridge consists of five stone piers, though only three are the original stone segmented arches, with two having been rebuilt within brick arches.
- 3.5.10 The Domesday Survey records Berkswell as having one hide (approximately 5.4ha) of land and one league (approximately 2.4km) long and one league wide of woodland that was held by the Count of Meulan⁴⁰. It then passed to his brother Henry de Newburgh, Earl of Warwick and through subsequent earls until it reverted to the Crown at the end of the 15th century. In 1325, several records relating to poaching and appointments of park bailiffs were recorded in Berkswell. It is possible that this related to the park that surrounds Berkswell Hall³⁸.

- 3.5.11 The village of Barston is located within the wide bend of the River Blythe, 3km north-west of Balsall Common. In the Domesday survey, Barston was known as Bercestone or Bertonstone and was an established farming community of 20 households located among the low-lying lands of Barston and Bradnock marshes^{41 43}. The land comprised nine hides (approximately 437ha), with a woodland ½ league (approximately 1.2km) long and three furlongs (approximately 200m) wide⁴⁰. By the 13th century, the land had become the property of the Knights Templar and remained so until 1312 when they were dissolved⁴³.
- 3.5.12 At the Dissolution of the Monasteries, Barston was a part of the Balsall (Common) manor and was granted to John Fisher and Thomas Dabridgecourt. By 1588, however, Barston had separated from Balsall (Common) and the manor was subsequently passed down through a succession of owners³⁸.
- 3.5.13 The original settlement of Meriden was known as Alspath and was located on a hill, east of the present-day village^{44 45}. Before 1066, the settlement was held by the Countess Godiva⁴⁰. A major feature of the medieval manor was the extensive woodlands that were part of the Forest of Arden; approximately 7.2km long and 4.8km wide. A 1531 deed, named 'The Shafts' as a 48ha common wood where villagers were entitled to graze pigs or collect brushwood, and areas of 'The Shaft' and 'Millicents Wood' for use by the lords of the manor³⁴.
- 3.5.14 By the mid to later medieval period, stone castles became fewer and small motte and bailey castles - fortified earthwork mounds with an adjacent enclosed area (bailey) surrounded by a ditch⁴⁶ - were largely abandoned. Far more in abundance were moated homesteads, which were the homes of a lesser feudal lord or free tenants. Moated houses range from the fortified homes of the lesser aristocracy, built with corner towers and walls, gatehouses and broad surrounding moats; to a farmhouse and garden of a free tenant farmer³². The wealthier homes were seen as status symbols that had privacy and security, keeping out thieves and animals. In areas of waterlogged clay, a moat acted as a drain ensuring the platform was kept dry. Wet moats provided additional resources, such as fish ponds, a swannery or for ducks, which then became an extra source of food^{34 32}.

⁴³ Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC), (1986), *Barston Village Study*.

⁴⁴ Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC), (1986), *Meriden Village Study*.

⁴⁵ Meriden history; <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/localhistory/16410.htm>; accessed: 18.07.13

⁴⁶ Adkins, L. and Adkins, R., (1998), *The Handbook of British Archaeology*. Constable.

- 3.5.15 Within the area, and especially north-west Warwickshire, a high number of moated sites have been recorded; such as at Ram Hall (BHA046) and Moat House Farm (BHA026) at Mercote. Within Berkswell, there are six known moated sites alone⁴⁷. In Hampton-in-Arden, an unusual moat type has been recorded, which is also a scheduled monument (BHA192). Due to topographical restrictions, the moat had only been constructed on the north and east sides, with a buttressed wall forming the south and west. The moat remains visible but now partially waterlogged, and measures 140m by 90m. The entrance to the island is located through the eastern wall, which then leads to the medieval manor house and church. This inner island contains the re-built late medieval timber-framed Moat House (Grade II*; BHA192) dating from 16th and 17th centuries. Prior to the construction, the original manor house was demolished but the masonry is believed to have been re-used within the new structure. It is now used as a farm. From about 1450, moats began to be less fashionable and many sites were abandoned for new timber-framed farmhouses or stone mansions a short distance away³².
- 3.5.16 Between 1150 and 1350, lords encouraged new tenants to clear farms from the heath and woodland, in the Forest of Arden, to colonise the land and use it for arable cultivation⁴⁷⁴⁸. In the landscape, evidence of this activity remains, by the remnants of medieval ridge-and-furrow. Within the study area, numerous areas of ridge-and-furrow dating from this period have been recorded; west of Ram Hall (BHA049) south-west of Mercote Hall (BHA135) and in two areas at Berkswell – west of Lavender Hall (BHA068) and at Mercote Farm (BHA119 and BHA121).
- 3.5.17 As part of their demesne lands, many larger manors had deer parks; an example of this is seen at Berkswell (BHA063). They varied in size and were preserved as open grazing land and woodland, sometimes with fishponds and/or rabbit warrens. They were, however, primarily for the protection and maintenance of deer, which could then be hunted by the lord. To enclose the deer and keep poachers out, parks were surrounded by banks and ditches that included an oak pale fence or, more rarely, a wall on top of the bank. Considerable incomes were gained for the lord, by letting out park pastures for grazing herds and managing their associated woodlands³².
- 3.5.18 The Arden lords also invested in the construction and maintenance of hedges, ditches and fences around meadow land⁴⁸. Many acres of water meadows, as seen within the study area (BHA134, BHA138, BHA148 and BHA166), were once an important part of the village economy, though those near the river banks were always liable to serious flooding³⁴. Other landscape changes included the construction of boundaries. To add land value, enclosures were constructed when the land was put out for pastoral use. This produced a constant source of income from repair and extensions to the enclosure⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ Nichol, K., (1995), *West Midlands Moated Sites Survey: Interim Report*, SWA 1643. Solihull Sites and Monuments Record.

⁴⁸ Watkins, A., (1997), *Landowners and their Estates in the Forest of Arden in the Fifteenth Century*, 18-33, in Phillips, A.D.M. and Hey, D.G. (eds) *Agricultural History Review*, Volume 45. The British Agricultural History Society.

- 3.5.19 Between individual lands, local boundaries had to be maintained. Natural features such as streams made satisfactory local boundaries; however, artificial mounds were also constructed and deemed a legal requirement enforced by local government officials. At Berkswell, these mounds were used to emphasise the start of the village. In 1654, however, John Baldwin of Meriden Hall was fined for not keeping a sufficient boundary on the Berkswell side of his land³⁴.
- 3.5.20 There are a number of archaeological assets dating to this period within the study area, supported by extensive documentary evidence. These elements combine to hold evidential and historical value which can help with the understanding of the evolution of the study area from small, early medieval settlements to larger medieval manors and estates. The numerous moated sites established here can also provide evidence of social status and utilisation of the landscape and provide the opportunity to investigate the decline in moated sites, whether there was a wholesale abandonment of this architectural form, or a gradual shift.

3.6 Post medieval 1540-1901

- 3.6.1 By the middle of the 18th century, new agricultural improvements helped maximise production and profit. Most of the midland countryside lay in large estates and their owners were able to invest in large-scale enclosure by private or parliamentary act. Open fields were removed and new fields laid out, where they were farmed from isolated farmstead settlements; such as Mouldings Green Farm (Grade II; BHA175), which dates to c.1600. At Patrick Farm, Meriden, archaeological investigation recorded agricultural remains from this period^{49 50}.
- 3.6.2 Enclosure within the River Tame-Blythe corridor created a more uniform landscape of geometric-shaped fields separated by new hedges⁵¹. At Barston, the commons were enclosed in 1732³⁸. By 1843, the tithe apportionment indicated the number of farms within the village had risen to 30, with arable and pasture farming being of equal importance⁵².
- 3.6.3 The dispersed settlement of Berkswell saw rapid population growth during the post-medieval period. Whilst pastoral farming was still dominant until 1650, arable farming became the principal farming method for the wealthier farmers of the area. In the 16th century, the village was a major cattle market and dairying became of increasing importance. The timber-framed farm houses were occupied by families who followed a traditional 'woodland' dual economy – keeping animals, growing crops and provided a trade⁵³.

49 Kenyon, D., (1999), *Park Farm, Berkswell, Metropolitan Borough of Solihull: Cultural Heritage Assessment*. Cotswold Archaeological Trust.

50 Thompson, P., (2003), *Archaeological Evaluation at Fentham Hall, Marsh Lane, Hampton-in-Arden, Solihull*. Warwickshire Museum Field Services, Report No. 0349.

51 Changing Landscapes; <http://timetrail.warwickshire.gov.uk/toolkitview.aspx?tid=2&page=30>; accessed: 18.07.13

52 Barston history; <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/localhistory/16320.htm>; accessed: 18.07.13

53 Tucker, T., (1983), *Berkswell 1550-1660, A Warwickshire Village and its People*. Metropolitan Borough of Solihull Education Committee.

- 3.6.4 The new agricultural evolution supplied not only valuable agricultural land, but also abundance in building materials. By the post-medieval period, the most common industrial activity, on the Arden estates, was the manufacture of wooden building materials. A large amount of timber for the frames of buildings was felled within many demesne woodlands. It was known that Arden building materials served a wide area, which included the Avon valley, Feldon, south Staffordshire and parts of Leicestershire⁴⁸.
- 3.6.5 With such prolific building materials being available, a number of farmsteads were modified and added to as a result of changing fashions; and some replaced with more elaborate structures. Within the study area, significant survivals of this transition include substantial halls at Diddington (BHA216), Lavender Hall (BHA058) and Ram Hall (BHA046).
- 3.6.6 During the post-medieval period, not all villages were dependent on an agricultural economy. On the east Warwickshire Coalfield, coal was being mined by the 13th century. By the mid-18th century, new industrial techniques and improving communications helped bring industry to more localised areas⁵⁴. However, much of the area remained rural, where it attracted a number of successful businessmen and their families who wanted to escape the 'smoke of Birmingham'. For example, Joseph Feeney, who was the owner of the Birmingham Post and Mail newspaper, bought the farm at The Moat, Berkswell. After being accepted into the rural society, he then became a local benefactor¹².
- 3.6.7 Rural conservation also depended on existing landowners, such as Lord Aylesford who owned much of Meriden, and several others who had extensive estates, such as Berkswell, Solihull and Hampton-in-Arden. Sir Frederick Peel inherited the manor of Hampton-in-Arden from his father, Sir Robert Peel, the former Prime Minister, on his death in 1850. Sir Frederick did much to 'modernise' the manor by demolishing many half-timbered and thatched cottages. He employed the architect W. E. Nesfield to build new dwellings, shops and lodges¹².
- 3.6.8 New turnpike roads helped improve travel and, along with coaching stages, helped establish local villages, such as Meriden. The construction of London Road drew the village centre away from the hill, to the valley alongside the road. It was turnpiked in 1821 and Meriden then became a successful coaching stage, with several inns and ale houses⁵⁵⁵⁶ 44. Other villages that thrived from transport links was Hampton-in-Arden. The village was established at the junction of the main routes to Kenilworth, Solihull and Coventry, and remains an important location for transport links.

⁵⁴ Changing Landscapes; <http://timetrail.warwickshire.gov.uk/toolkitview.aspx?tid=2&page=30>; Accessed: 18.07.13

⁵⁵ Rowlands, M.B. (1987) *A Regional History of England: The West Midlands from AD1000*. Longman

⁵⁶ Meriden history; <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/localhistory/16410.htm>; accessed: 18.07.13

- 3.6.9 By the 19th century, the railways had arrived to the Arden area. With the success of the Liverpool to Manchester railway (LMR), which opened in 1830, the railway proved itself as a successful commercial venture providing the first inter-city passenger service in the country, while providing an important transport function for moving goods and raw materials between the industrial centres. It was quickly decided that the Midlands would benefit from its own railway system, marking the start of the struggle to establish the first line into Birmingham. Warwickshire occupied a critical position within this struggle, with many of the biggest names in railway development running through the county, namely the London and Birmingham railway (LBR) and the Grand Junction railway, who subsequently amalgamated as part of the London and Northwest railway (LNWR), the Birmingham and Derby Junction railway (BDR) and the Birmingham and Gloucester railway (BGR)⁵⁷.
- 3.6.10 The LBR represented the first main line railway to enter London, providing a link between the capital and the burgeoning industrial centre at Birmingham. The 180km (112 miles) were surveyed by Robert Stephenson with termini at Euston for London and Curzon Street for Birmingham. The line ran from London through Rugby and Coventry to Birmingham. As it approached Birmingham, the line was directed through Berkswell Station (BHA039), Hampton-in-Arden, running to Stechford and, thus, entering Birmingham from the east. The first bill was submitted in 1832, but was rejected due to the overwhelming opposition by local landowners and those with an interest in the roads and canals, who were worried about the competition. However, the submission of a second bill only a year later was successful and the Act passed for the new line⁵⁷.
- 3.6.11 An additional line ran into Birmingham from the east, known as the BDR. The original plan was to provide a route from Derby to London, terminating at Hampton-in-Arden where trains could join the LBR into Birmingham, albeit from a separate station located to the north of the village. Agreements with the Midlands Counties railway resulted in an abridged route with no branch line to Hampton-in-Arden being submitted in 1836. The bill was passed and the 68km (42 mile) line opened in 1839. However, it was soon realised that the Midland Counties railway had revoked their promise and submitted plans for their own branch line to Erewash Valley, in competition with the BDR. The BDR passed a fresh bill in 1840 to open their Hampton Branch known as the Stonebridge railway (BHA224), which ran from Whiteacre to Hampton-in-Arden, with intermediate stations at Castle Bromwich, Water Orton and Coleshill and a terminus at Lawley Street, to the east of Curzon Street. The Lawley Street terminus contained passenger and freight facilities, locomotive maintenance and repair shops⁵⁷.
- 3.6.12 The BGR ran between Gloucester and Birmingham, opening in 1841. Its northern terminus was at Camp Hill, where passengers could transfer to a new line that took them into the centre of Birmingham at Curzon Street. The line joined with the Bristol and Gloucester railway in 1845, being subsequently taken over by the Midland Railway Company only a year later⁵⁸. The line itself ran to the west of the county, outside the study area⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ Warwickshire Railways; <http://www.warwickshirerailways.com/index.htm>; accessed: 25.07.13

⁵⁸ Railways in Worcestershire: Birmingham to Bromsgrove and Gloucester; <http://www.miac.org.uk/gloucesterline.htm>; accessed: 21.02.13

- 3.6.13 The arrival of the railway caused the transformation of many local villages, but especially Balsall Common and Hampton-in-Arden. Balsall Common was of little significance until the 19th century, consisting of heathland without the main roads in existence today⁵⁹. It was originally part of Hampton-in-Arden, until 1863 when it then became a separate parish. The early settlement was represented by a series of disparate buildings arranged around the present Balsall Street and Station Road. With the arrival of the railway, Balsall Common underwent a substantial change and was then enlarged in 1932 by the inclusion of a part of Knowle, which gives it its character today³⁸.
- 3.6.14 In Hampton-in-Arden, considerable change and prosperity was brought by both the Grand Union Canal, to the west, and the railway, which crosses the village in the north-east³⁵. When the railway line was built, it was alleged that Sir Frederick Peel used his influence, as a railway commissioner, to make the London Express stop at Hampton-in-Arden. It has since been established that trains originally stopped at Hampton-in-Arden because of the DJR, which enabled travellers from Derby to make a connection for London⁶⁰. The construction of the railway line, actions of Peel and later Nesfield, helped shape the current Hampton-in-Arden. Since the 20th century, considerable growth of the village has followed and it now thrives as a dormitory settlement⁴².
- 3.6.15 The railway brought more townspeople into the countryside, but the area still included some smaller isolated communities. At Berkswell, the arrival of the railway did not significantly impact the village. Its unique entirety was, and is, retained. Berkswell village was put up for sale in 1888, as the estate of the late Mr Thomas Walker. There were 39 lots on offer, but it was lots one and two that formed the largest part of the original estate. Lot one comprised Berkswell Hall, park, 12 dairy farms, numerous cottages and small dwellings, contained within 620 ha. Lot two was the estate known as Mercote Hall and comprised the residence with stables, farm homesteads, Park Farm, Mercote Mill and several cottages contained within 166ha. These two lots were sold together to Mr Joshua Hirst Wheatley of Mirfield, Yorkshire. Following the sale, the estate continued to develop, which also included the donation of the Reading Room to the village to help improve social life. Ownership of the estate continued with the family until the death of Mrs Wheatley (Joshua's daughter-in-law) in 1987⁶¹.

3.7 20th century/modern 1901-present

- 3.7.1 Within the area, some of the larger houses were used as military hospitals during World War I (WWI). These included The Rectory at Berkswell and the Institute at Hampton-in-Arden. At The Moat in Berkswell, officers from the Dominions, on leave or injured, were also welcomed to stay¹².

⁵⁹ Balsall Common history; <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/localhistory/16314.htm>; Accessed: 18.07.13

⁶⁰ Hampton-in-Arden history; <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/localhistory/16378.htm>; Accessed: 18.07.13

⁶¹ Smith, A., (1988), *Berkswell 1888 -1988: One Hundred Years of Life in a Village Now Under Threat*. Simanda Press.

- 3.7.2 During World War II (WWII), airfields in the vicinity were requisitioned including Hockley Heath that was used for training and another at Balsall Common¹². This base, known as RAF Honiley, was for night-fighter squadrons and various training until its closure. It is now used as an automotive test area by Prodrive⁶². Throughout the area there were barrage balloons, observation posts, searchlight batteries and anti-aircraft batteries, including one in Berkswell Estate. At Balsall Common a decoy was positioned to attract bombers away from the towns¹². In Hampton-in-Arden, an ammunition depot was subject to a building survey in 2011. This survey revealed that whilst some original features had been lost, the structure had been successfully re-used; in this instance, for general storage and office space.
- 3.7.3 In the post-war period, the construction of new homes and the creation of employment opportunities for returning soldiers was the main preoccupation. During the 1950s and 1960s, villages saw the building of some new houses and small industry, such as light engineering¹². It was also during this time that the construction of major roads and motorways began, dividing the countryside and impacting upon local villages. At Meriden, the A45 bypass was opened in 1958 to alleviate traffic through the village. Whilst it contributed to the extensive growth of the village, the new road network severed the village from its historical links with the local transport network. This therefore reduced opportunities for further growth and expansion⁴⁴.
- 3.7.4 Intensive farming and greater agricultural production, since the post-war period, has resulted in large-scale hedge removal in the local countryside. This, combined with the construction of major route-ways, has now contributed to the loss of regional distinctiveness within the Arden area⁶³.

⁶² Honiley; <http://www.controltowers.co.uk/H-K/Honiley.htm>; accessed: 26.07.13

⁶³ Changing Landscapes; <http://timetrail.warwickshire.gov.uk/toolkitview.aspx?tid=2&page=30>; accessed: 18.07.13

4 Built heritage

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section provides baseline information relating to built heritage assets within the land required for construction, 500m study area and wider 2km study area. The section provides the following information:
- broad overview of the character and form of the settlement pattern within the area;
 - detailed descriptions of all built heritage assets wholly or partially within the land required for construction; and
 - detailed descriptions of key designated assets within the 500m study area.
- 4.1.2 Information on designated assets within the 2km/ZTV study area, but outside of the 250m/500m study area, can be found in the Gazetteer in Appendix CH-002-023 as can information on undesignated assets within the 500m study area.

4.2 Overview

- 4.2.1 There are 93 listed buildings within the study area, including two Grade I, seven Grade II* and 84 Grade II. Four of the structures (BHA96, BHA144, BHA186 and BHA192) are also designated as scheduled monuments and are not discussed here.
- 4.2.2 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) has produced a list of structures identified as being of local historic, architectural and/or archaeological interest. A single non-designated building has been identified within the study area. One structure has also been identified by the HER as being of local historic interest.
- 4.2.3 The landscape within this study area is characterised by small settlements set within open countryside, typical of the Meriden Gap within which it lies. This is reflected in the building stock, with listed buildings concentrated in the main settlements of Hampton-in-Arden, Berkswell and Balsall Common. Outside these, structures are typified by isolated farmsteads and former manors.

4.3 Built Heritage assets within the land required for construction

- 4.3.1 There are no built heritage assets within the land required, temporarily or permanently for the construction of the Proposed Scheme.

4.4 Key built heritage assets within 500m of the land required for construction

Berkswell Conservation Area (BHA065)

- 4.4.1 Also located within the study area is the settlement of Berkswell, a designated conservation area. Similar to Hampton-in-Arden, Berkswell is associated with an extant manor; however, at Berkswell the manor remains a dominant feature. Berkswell has a sense of place that is reflected in its layout and form and enhanced by its strong landscape context. Central to its history is the Church of St. John the Baptist (Grade I; BHA101) situated to the west of the village, on the edge of the former medieval deer park. The church retains evidence of Saxon fabric within its crypt, with the superstructure of Norman origins, with 15th century additions, including its squat west tower. Also of historic interest is the 18th century Berks Well (Grade II; BHA094). The structure represents a sunken ashlar basin fed by an underground spring. Architecturally, the structure is unremarkable; however, it retains significant evidential value and is likely to be a later replacement of an earlier feature. The structure has also given its name to the adjacent 17th century building behind it. Unlike the vernacular architecture and domestic scale of the dominant buildings form within Berkswell, Well House (Grade II; BHA099) represents a substantial manor house, employing polite architecture in its Dutch gables and stone dressings. The house is set back from the street, behind a brick boundary wall with extensive gardens to the south.
- 4.4.2 While the village proper is located to the east of the church, to the west is the large expanse of Berkswell Estate, encompassing the Grade II* listed Berkswell Hall (BHA106). The hall was rebuilt in 1815 to create a substantial classical structure, and converted to flats in 1984. Although outside the conservation area, the hall has retained its influence over the village. The rebuilding of the hall and creation of a picturesque landscape also saw a shift in focus for the village away from the main crossroads towards the hall and the village green.
- 4.4.3 The village buildings include examples from the 16th century through to the 19th century, with this history reflected in the change from thatch and timber-framing to brick and clay tiles. However, the buildings retain their coherence as a group, each occupying a defined plot along the main thoroughfares. The central focus of the village green creates the most cohesive architectural form, with rows of predominantly late 18th and early 19th century red brick buildings of two storeys. This includes the Grade II Village School (BHA092) and the Almshouses (Grade II; BHA084), both symbols of local philanthropy.
- 4.4.4 Beyond the green, the character of the conservation area becomes less cohesive, with piecemeal development focussed around the main crossroads. It is here that the earliest structures survive, most notably the 17th century Bear Inn (Grade II; BHA075).

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.4.5 The low density of buildings is complemented by the high proportion of green space within the village boundaries, reinforcing a connection with the surrounding parkland. Aside from the village green there are significant areas of tree planting, particularly along B4102 Meriden Road and Lavender Hall Lane. These create a strong sense of enclosure within the village, with little intervisibility with the wider landscape, enhancing its sense of tranquillity.
- 4.4.6 The park forms a significant feature within the village, alongside the church and Well House. While the hall remains outside the conservation area it forms a significant part of its setting. The influence of the park is reflected in the built form within the village despite few visual links between the two. The lack of modern intervention has preserved the historic legibility of the village and its setting.

Rural manors

- 4.4.7 Outside of these settlements, the study area retains its agricultural character. The Rugby to Birmingham railway represents a linear feature that cuts through the area, linking the two extremes of Balsall Common and Hampton-in-Arden; however, its presence is little appreciated beyond its immediate corridor. Instead, the rural evolution of the area is evident, motivated by the large-scale clearances of the Forest of Arden, supplying not only valuable agricultural land, but also abundant building materials. The clearances gave rise to isolated farmstead settlements and moated manors. A number of these sites survive, often replaced with elaborate farmsteads.
- 4.4.8 The manors represent significant historic structures architecturally, as well as providing important evidential value in the evolution of the landscape within the study area. The siting of the manors was an important consideration in their establishment; therefore, setting remains critical to our appreciation and understanding of their value. The relatively unaltered rural landscape within the study area has preserved this setting and the significance remains legible.

Lavender Hall Farmhouse (BHA058) and Barn at Lavender Hall Farm (BHA059)

- 4.4.9 The Grade II* Lavender Hall (BHA058) and adjacent Grade II listed barn (BHA059) form a significant group dating to the 16th and 17th centuries. The pair are situated within a loose courtyard plan, with modern outbuildings to the east. The hall dates to the 16th century with the barn added in the 17th century, but complimenting it in style and materials, using timber-frame and red brick noggin. The hall is of architectural value as an early survival of a manor house, alongside its historic value in providing evidence for the land use of this area in the post-medieval period, reinforced by the adjacent barn.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.4.10 The Lavender Hall complex has lost much of its sense of place through the conversion of the site to light industrial use. The associated farmland has been largely lost, except to the north, and the ability to understand this relationship has been eroded by the modern outbuildings. To the east, the land remains open and is in use as a fishery, with Lavender Hall Lane and the Rugby to Birmingham railway forming a boundary to the north and west. Both the farmhouse and barn exhibit architectural significance in their retention of 16th and 17th century fabric, with their interest enhanced by the survival of their context as a group. However, the legibility of their setting has been reduced.

Diddington Hall (BHA216) and Diddington Farmhouse (BHA222)

- 4.4.11 Diddington Hall (Grade II*; (BHA216) is located between Diddington Lane and the A452 Kenilworth Road, south of the A45 Coventry Road. The hall dates to the late 16th century and retains a significant amount of early fabric, despite its conversion to school use. It is of red brick with red sandstone dressings, including stone mullioned windows. The main house faces to the east, with a range of outbuildings enclosing it to the north. Access is provided from both Diddington Lane and the A452 Kenilworth Road and these two roads largely define its boundaries, with open greenspace and fields surrounding it, contributing to the appreciation of their setting. The building is also well screened, with the natural topography shielding it from view to the west.
- 4.4.12 Forming a group with Diddington Hall is Diddington Farmhouse (BHA222) to the north. The Grade II* listed farmhouse is also 16th century and described by English Heritage as being a 'simpler version' of the hall⁶⁴. The farmhouse retains its external 16th century appearance with red brick elevations broken by stone mullion windows. It also follows the typical 'H'-plan layout. In contrast to Diddington Hall, Diddington Farm better reveals its agricultural heritage, with surviving outbuildings creating a courtyard around the main farmhouse.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.4.13 Both buildings lie within a rural landscape. While only Diddington Farmhouse remains as a working farm, the setting contributes to the understanding of both assets. Their isolated position reinforces the wealth of their owners, reinforced by their architecture. The setting of the farm is largely shared by the hall and neither should be seen in isolation. Similarly, the removal of the rural setting of the buildings would remove the understanding of their significance.

⁶⁴ National Heritage List; <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1076766>; accessed 13.02.13

Ram Hall (BHAo46) and Barn at Ram Hall (BHAo47)

- 4.4.14 The Grade II* listed Ram Hall (BHAo46) represents a double range dwelling dating to the 16th century. It is of high architectural quality for the period with a sandstone ashlar façade. Located to the north of the hall is the Grade II listed barn (BHAo47) constructed in the late 16th- early 17th century. The barn is simple in plan and execution with a timber-frame and brick noggin. The hall is now in use as a working farmhouse, with the farm proper situated to the north, defined by large, 20th century sheds. The hall represents a good example of a 16th century building, despite some later modifications, and forms an important group with the neighbouring barn.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.4.15 Immediately surrounding the farm are open agricultural fields which reflect its historic setting. Its isolated position provides evidence for the extent of land ownership in the 16th century with the hall representing a wealthy establishment. The function of the building is clearly evident within the landscape with its setting making an important contribution to the significance of the assets.

Berkswell Grange (BHAo20)

- 4.4.16 Berkswell Grange (Grade II; BHAo20) represents a large manor house constructed in the 17th century, but with significant alteration in the 19th century. The house faces onto Truggist Lane, with the building extending to the north. The house is a substantial building and retains its 17th century character. It lies within pleasant formal grounds and, despite its proximity to the road, retains a sense of seclusion.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.4.17 The Grange lies within the hamlet of Carol Green, but retains its seclusion through its extensive gardens. This is typical of the buildings within Carol Green and the arrangement adds to the rural character of the area. The setting of the grange therefore makes a positive contribution to its setting, enabling an appreciation of its function as a manor house.

Farmsteads

- 4.4.18 Elsewhere within the study area is evidence for smaller scale farms establishing themselves in the post-medieval period. The significance of a number of buildings within the study area is associated with this development, with farmhouses and barns providing evidence for the development.

- 4.4.19 Setting makes an important contribution to understanding the significance of the farmstead as a building type. The relationship between the farm and the surrounding agricultural landscape enables its function to be fully understood, with standardised building techniques and architectural styles common to the group as a whole. Through much of the study area, development and infrastructure has eroded this relationship. Where the agricultural landscape remains a tangible feature it forms part of the significance of the asset.

Moulding Green Farmhouse (BHA175)

- 4.4.20 One of the earliest farmsteads to survive is Mouldings Green Farm (Grade II; BHA175), which dates to c.1600. Although an early survival, the Grade II listing reflects the extent of later alteration and modification. The early fabric remains legible in the timber frame and stone plinth, with surviving jetties to the south. The building survives as an interesting example of an early farmstead with retained architectural integrity.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.4.21 The farmhouse is now in use as offices, with the outbuildings converted to commercial use, probably as a result of its convenient location just off the A452 Kenilworth Road; however, the group remains a significant example of a former farm complex with tangible links to the open fields which form its setting to the west.

Hornbrook Farm (BHA146) and Barn at Hornbrook Farm (BHA147)

- 4.4.22 Hornbrook Farm (Grade II; BHA146) dates to the 17th century, constructed from timber-frame with brick noggin. The adjacent barn (Grade II; BHA147) is earlier in date, representing a good example of a 17th century timber-framed barn. The complex is now in light industrial use with unsympathetic 20th century outbuildings, but remains significant as a group.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.4.23 The group lie on a piece of land between the A452 Kenilworth Road and Cornets End Lane, and, although no longer in farm use, retain their agricultural setting. Some erosion of their setting has taken place to the south with sand and gravel extraction; however, the relationship of the buildings to their landscape remains tangible.

Mercote Mill Farmhouse (BHA136)

- 4.4.24 Also located within this parcel of land is Mercote Mill Farmhouse (Grade II; BHA136). The farmhouse dates to the 17th century, although it was substantially altered in the 19th century. To the rear of the house is a series of outbuildings of little historic interest, with the complex set within an open agricultural landscape which form part of its historic setting. The significance of the buildings lies in the survival of its 17th century fabric and contribution to the farming landscape.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.4.25 The relationship of Mercote Mill Farmhouse to its agricultural landscape is clearly visible with open fields extending to the west. Despite sand and gravel extraction to the east, this is well-screened and does not impact on the ability to understand the relationship between the building and its historic setting.

Pasture Farmhouse (BHA222)

- 4.4.26 Pasture Farmhouse (Grade II; (BHA225)) is dated to 1666 and survives as a good example of a 17th century timber-framed farmstead, with evidence that it may incorporate earlier fabric. The external appearance is largely intact with jettied gables on moulded bressumers. Its group value is enhanced by the survival of its substantial threshing barn to the north with few subsequent additions. The building is an important example of the building type, which survives in good condition.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.4.27 The farm lies to the south of the A45 Coventry Road, surrounded by open fields, and despite its proximity to the road, it retains its secluded character. The group value of the farmhouse and tithe barn adds to their importance as a cohesive farmstead. The relatively unchanged rural setting of the farm enhances its significance, enabling an appreciation of the function of the building.

Beechwood Farm and barn (BHA014)

- 4.4.28 Few 18th century examples survive within the study area, due in part to the extensive coverage already witnessed by the 17th century. Examples can be seen at Beechwood Farm, Hodgetts Lane (BHA014). The farm dates to the late 18th century, although the majority of buildings date to the 19th century, with modern outbuildings to the west. The significance of Beechwood is largely historic with the former farm now divided into separate dwellings, with formal gardens to the north and east, alongside the Rugby to Birmingham railway.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.4.29 Enclosing the site to the west is the extant embankment of the former Stonebridge Railway with the Rugby to Birmingham railway running to the east. This has significantly impacted on the agricultural setting of the building with little appreciation of the historic function of the asset.

Meriden Mill Farmhouse (BHA170)

- 4.4.30 Many of the farmsteads have been modified and added to as a result of changing fashions and farming practice. During the 19th century, a large number of farmsteads were expanded and can now be used to provide evidence for this change. Meriden Mill Farmhouse (BHA170), for example, dates to the 17th century, but was substantially altered in the 19th century with the addition of a red brick range. The surviving 17th century fabric is still identifiable in the timber framing. Brick outbuildings are located to the north, south and east of the main house with the grounds extending from the River Blythe to the south and Kenilworth Road to the north.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.4.31 The setting of the farm is degraded to some extent by the Hampton Lane roundabout, which lies less than 200m to the south-east. However, the open landscape to the west reinforces the rural character of the asset and makes a positive contribution to its significance.

4.5 Key designated built heritage assets beyond 500m of the land required for construction

Hampton-in-Arden Conservation Area (BHA179)

- 4.5.1 To the north of the study area, located in a wedge of land created by the M42 and the Rugby to Birmingham railway, is the conservation area of Hampton-in-Arden. The conservation area encompasses the historic core of the village, extending west to include Hampton Manor and associated parkland. The village was established at the junction of the main routes to Kenilworth, Solihull and Coventry and remains an important location for transport links. The village appears in the Domesday Survey and continued to expand through the medieval and post-medieval periods. The Church of St. Mary and St. Bartholomew (Grade I; BHA191) provides evidence of this history with surviving 12th century fabric, being extended every century until 1879. The church marks the historic centre of the village, situated on a slight rise at the junction of Solihull Road and High Street. Around the church are examples of 17th and 18th century timber-framed buildings, notably the White Lion Public House (Grade II; BHA184).

- 4.5.2 The village underwent substantial changes in the 19th century, which gives it its present character. The first change was the arrival of the railway. In the 1830s railway mania consumed Birmingham, with competing companies vying for the best route into the city. Hampton-in-Arden benefitted from this competition with the junction of the BDR and the LNWR, each establishing their own station. The LNWR building was replaced in 1884 with the present Hampton-in-Arden Station. The BDR station survives to the north, outside the conservation area. The second change was a more localised one, with the arrival of William Nesfield in the late 19th century. Nesfield, at the request of Frederick Peel, redesigned many of the buildings within the village to create an interesting collection of domestic and commercial structures, which give Hampton-in-Arden its unique architectural character. The result creates a unified appearance of red brick buildings with decorative tile and plaster detailing in the picturesque vernacular style that typifies the architectural character of the village. Significant examples are positioned along the High Street, including the Grade II listed Manor Cottage (BHA200) and nos. 69-75 (odd) and 32-42 (even) High Street BHA202 and BHA195).
- 4.5.3 Within the village, the built form provides a combination of terraces and detached properties; however, the dominance of greenery and vegetation is evident throughout. The rural setting of Hampton is emphasised by the inclusion of Hampton Manor (Grade II*; BHA208), which lies within the western part of the conservation area. The manor, now a hotel, is situated within substantial gardens. The open greenspace provided by Hampton Manor blurs the boundary between the village and the surrounding agricultural land, emphasising the position of Hampton with the Meriden Gap.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.5.4 Hampton-in-Arden lies within an open rural landscape with the attractive greenspace within the village contributing to the smooth transition between the settlement and its wider context. However, the influence of Nesfield has resulted in a distinct built form which creates a discrete architectural unit. The resulting built-up streetscapes and enclosed views has resulted in little interaction with the surrounding landscape. Instead, the setting of the majority of the village is tied to the manor house, enabling an appreciation of the historic relationship of the settlement with the Peel family.

Balsall Common

- 4.5.5 The present settlement of Balsall Common owes much to the arrival of the railway in the 19th century, continuing to expand throughout the 20th century. Prior to this it was formed by a series of disparate settlements, becoming a cohesive whole in the post-war period. The early settlement was represented by a series of disparate buildings arranged around the present Balsall Street and Station Road. This is reflected in the dispersal of listed buildings, with the majority aligned on the western edge of the settlement, following Balsall Street. A significant number are associated with the 17th century development of the village with good examples of timber framing surviving throughout the settlement. Concentrations of this type of building survive along Meeting House Lane and Balsall Street. On the main approaches to the settlements is evidence of how the village has encroached upon the agricultural landscape, with the historic setting of the Grade II listed Balsall Street Farm (BHA056), Frogmore Grange (BHA052) and Barrett's Lane Farm (BHA025) now largely eroded.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.5.6 The current character of Balsall Common reflects its historic development, with many of the historic buildings now isolated within late 20th century streetscapes. The individual assets make a positive contribution to the overall townscape; however, the loss of their historic context has affected the integrity of their setting.

5 Historic map regression

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 The 1610 John Speed map shows the settlement at Hampton-in-Arden as well as the estate at Berkswell, which is shown as enclosed parkland. The 1698 Robert Morden map in Camden's *Britannica*⁶⁵ also shows Hampton-in-Arden, Diddington and Berkswell, which is once again shown as a very large estate, surrounded by parkland and fully enclosed. It is interesting to note that this map does not show the estate at Packington as enclosed. This may be a reflection of a later emparking date for the Packington estate.
- 5.1.2 The 1794 plan of Middle Bickenhill and Diddington is one of the first to show the study area in detail. The plan shows the very northern portion of the study area around Diddington Hill. Pasture Farm and Diddington Farm can both be seen on the map, though some of the buildings shown here are no longer extant. There is a large field to the north of Diddington Farm labelled as Brick Field and one section of Diddington Lane can be seen running from east to west to the north of Diddington Farm, but the southern part of the lane has not yet been laid out. The field names around this area are fairly standard, with names such as Corner Shut, Upper Shut, Stonebridge Shut and Barn Close. A number of small ponds are shown on this map, indicating localised gravel or clay extraction.
- 5.1.3 A plan dating from 1812 shows the estate of Hampton-in-Arden as part of a larger Crown Estates mapping programme, indicating that Hampton-in-Arden was, at this point, under the ownership of King George III. The map shows the area of land between Hampton-in-Arden and the River Blythe as mainly in the tenancy of Richard Astley and George Tandy with the Rev. R. Lillington owning a small section. The remainder of the land is parcelled up into smaller fields, with names such as Lea Meadow, Moor Close Allotment, Highway Moor and Slanging Meadow. The Hampton Enclosure map also issued in 1812 shows the same area that was parcelled up on the Crown Estates map as one whole area now labelled Lea Meadow with an indication that perhaps this area was either rough grazing, marshy or common land. The area to the north of B4102 Meriden Road and Patricks Bridge is broadly labelled as Millfield and there are a number of ash pits, and other small pits scattered around the plan.
- 5.1.4 A plan of 1835 shows that the land owned by the Earl of Aylesford in the parish of Bickenhill was sold to the London and Birmingham Railway Company to allow the railway to be constructed. To the south-east of Bradnock Marsh and to the west of Kenilworth Road, the field names through which the railway cuts, and to the east of the proposed line, include "Hanging Hill Field", "Gravelly Piece" and "Boggy Field". Fields are also shown to the east of Kenilworth Road called "Dolls Pits" and "Goose Neck Meadow". A large pond is also shown in the field named "Dolls Pits", but there is no trace of this today. To the north of Marsh Lane are fields named "Gravel Joint" and "Turnpike Furlong". Most of these field names reflect the boggy nature of this land and the rich potential for minerals, which has been exploited heavily in the modern period.

⁶⁵ Rootsweb; www.freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~genmaps/; accessed 17.04.13

- 5.1.5 The 1841 Berkswell tithe map offers a very detailed picture of land ownership and usage in the middle of the 19th century. The tithe apportionment shows that the biggest landowner in the area was Sir John Eardley-Wilmot, who held the baronet at Berkswell Hall. Eardley-Wilmot held a large proportion of the land situated within the study area. The tithe map shows clearly the route for the proposed railway cutting through the landscape to the south-west of Berkswell. Ram Hall at this time was in the tenancy of Samuel Garner and the fields surrounding the hall were labelled as "Moat Field", "Ram Field" and "Shooting Close". "Ram Hall" is not specifically labelled, but instead just called a "homestead and garden". Lavender Hall is listed under the ownership of Catherine Cannon and under the tenancy of Thomas Rotherham at this time and Fern Bank is also shown on this map, under the ownership of Sir John Eardley-Wilmot and tenanted by Samuel Cox. A moat is shown to the south of the proposed railway line in a field named "Moat and Home Meadow", but it is not shown on any of the later maps. The true extent of Berkswell Estate may be revealed by the tithe map. At present, the boundary is most readily viewed as the western part of the band of woodland labelled as the "Marlowes", running north then east to Meriden Road. However, the tithe map labels the field to the north-west of this as "Upper Park with pit", "Bottom Park Close", "Far Park Close", "Fair Middle Park" and "Great Park Close". These fields extend westwards to the site of New Mercote Farm and indicate that perhaps the boundary of the park extended further west.
- 5.1.6 The 1887 Ordnance Survey (OS) map shows the railways, which were planned and the routes laid out on the tithe maps of 1841. The line of the Kenilworth and Berkswell Branch of the London and North West Railway run from the south-east to the north-west towards Hampton-in-Arden before moving out of the study area. The line of the London and North West Railway is also shown running from west to east, meeting the Kenilworth Branch Line at Berkswell Station, another new element within the mapping. Although a relatively small and narrow footprint, the railway lines do form a major new linear element in this landscape, in contrast to the more sinuous lines of the turnpike and local roads in the area.
- 5.1.7 This map shows that the study area remains largely rural. The large houses at Ram Hall, Moat House Farm, Mercote Hall, Lavender Hall and Diddington Hall all remain, and the area is characterised by isolated and scattered farmsteads.
- 5.1.8 The 1905 OS map shows a small number of minor changes. The main difference is the beginnings of the growth of Balsall Common. On the previous 1887 map, there was no label identifying Balsall Common. There were a small number of buildings gathered around the central crossroads, but the only label was that at Needlers End, to the south-west of the crossroads. The 1905 OS shows that the area around the crossroad has been labelled "Balsall Common" and a small number of additional buildings have been added along the roadside. To the north of the railway line, to the south of Truggist Lane two new buildings have appeared labelled as "Villafranca" and "Berkswell House". Berkswell House in particular appears to have been set within grounds, with the railway line forming the southern boundary. A further two buildings are also shown to the west of Villafranca, but these are not labelled.

- 5.1.9 Further to the north, the group of buildings located to the south-west of Mercote Hall have been labelled as “Marsh Farm” and to the north of this, just west of the River Blythe is an unlabelled area shown as surrounded by a large bank. Anecdotal evidence has indicated that this was the location of an ice rink constructed by the Earl of Aylesford for the Packington Estate, but it is not labelled as such on this map.
- 5.1.10 As well as the growth seen in Balsall Common, the 1905 map also shows the gradual growth at Hampton-in-Arden. The settlement has begun to spread to the north of the railway line along the road and a new road has been constructed leading southwards of the Hampton Road. Housing plots are shown along this road, indicating the potential for continued expansion. It seems clear from this map that although only incremental, the arrival of the railway and the establishment of stations within or in close proximity to Hampton-in-Arden and Balsall Common has begun to have a visible effect on these settlements by providing the catalyst for expansion beyond their medieval limits in the case of Hampton-in-Arden, or the focus for a more disparate group of buildings in the case of Balsall Common.
- 5.1.11 The 1938 OS map shows a marked increase in the settlement at Balsall Common. The crossroads at the centre of the village are now labelled as Kenilworth Road and Station Road and development has appeared along all sides stretching nearly all the way to the railway line in the north. Development has also appeared between Needlers End and Balsall Street to the south-west. The railway line is also now shown as belonging to a different company and labelled the “London, Midland and Scottish Railway” (LMSR). Moving north-west through the study area, there is very little change shown. The site of Mercote Hall is no longer labelled and the majority of the buildings appear to have been demolished, leaving a long range still standing in isolation. Hampton-in-Arden has continued to increase in size and area with houses appearing along the B4102 and on the eastern side of Diddington Lane.
- 5.1.12 OS mapping from the 1950s for the southern part of the study area shows that the rural feeling of the landscape is still evident. The field boundaries shown on the earliest mapping are, to a large extent, still preserved, in particular to the east of Balsall Common, south of the LMSR line. The settlement at Balsall Common is shown as still expanding, though there is no significant increase in the number of buildings shown or the scale of the village. The area to the west of Needlers End has seen some additional housing and the road leading from Balsall Common to Wootton Grange is now labelled as “Long Arm Lane” and housing has appeared on both sides of the road. To the north of the railway line, the landscape remains virtually unchanged, particularly within the land holdings of the Berkswell Estate. The building shown remaining within the Mercote Hall complex is still extant on this map, but remains unlabelled. To the west of the railway line at Hampton-in-Arden, the settlement continues to expand southwards and this map shows the first extent northwards, beginning to infill the area between the LMSR and the Whitacre and Hampton-in-Arden branch of the Midland Railway. Development has also continued to creep northwards along Diddington Lane and large municipal sports grounds are also shown on this map.

- 5.1.13 By the 1960s map edition, a marked expansion of Balsall Common had taken place. The village is now a large town able to support a secondary school. The crossroads at the heart of the settlement is still readily visible, but all sides of the road are now lined with development. The area around Carol Green to the north of the railway line has also been slowly growing as shown on the previous map, but more visible here. Unlike Balsall Common, this area does not seem to be developing as a town, but more as a collection of large, detached properties set within the rural landscape of the Berkswell Estate. To the north of Balsall Common, the Kenilworth Road appears to have been widened, in particular where Bradnock Marsh Lane joins the road and a small number of new buildings have appeared along the road side. This map series is unfortunately not complete, and therefore, the remainder of the study area is not shown for this decade. The mapping from the 1970s, however, does show these blank areas. This shows that Hampton-in-Arden has experienced a significant increase in the number of buildings; however, the actual size of the settlement has remained fairly stable. The majority of the new buildings have been constructed within the confines of the existing settlement, between Fentham Road and Station Road. Isolated developments have appeared to the east of the settlement, including an ammunition depot. In addition, the Whitacre and Hampton-in-Arden branch line, also known as the Stonebridge Railway is shown as dismantled.
- 5.1.14 The 1970s map series does not show the southern portion of the study area, however, the 1980s set shows the entirety of the study area. This shows that Balsall Common is now a significantly large town with the original crossroads layout no longer legible. Development has infilled the area between Station Road, Needlers End and Balsall Street and new housing estates have appeared to the east of Kenilworth Road and west of Meeting House Lane. The former Kenilworth Branch Line is now shown as dismantled, though the line of the railway is still extant. The area around Berkswell remains largely unchanged, still characterised by isolated detached houses, such as Ram Hall and Lavender Hall. To the west of A452 Kenilworth Road, the gradual appearance of buildings seen on previous map editions has now developed into a large farm complex labelled as New Mercote Farm. The road network has developed in the northern part of the study area, with the former widening of Kenilworth Road as seen on previous map editions superseded by the construction of a bypass, which branches off from Kenilworth Road at Mercote Lodge. The road, an embanked dual carriageway, is labelled as the A452 Kenilworth Road and branches north and north-east from the junction, cutting through the fields between the old Kenilworth Road and Mercote Mill Farm. The road leads to a new roundabout situated east of Meriden Mill Farm and joins Hampton Lane, Cornets End Lane and the B4102 Meriden Road. The road then re-joins the original line of the Kenilworth Road, albeit a much widened version. Hampton-in-Arden, to the west of this new road has appeared to remain much the same size as on the 1970s map. No significant new housing developments or any infrastructure changes are shown.

- 5.1.15 The set of maps from the 1990s is not complete, but views of modern mapping show the continued expansion of Balsall Common, in particular to the north of Station Road and Needlers End Lane. The area of agricultural fields to the east of Balsall Common is still open and undeveloped, with the historic field patterns clearly legible. The area directly to the north of the railway line around Lavender Hall has experienced minor changes, but particularly noticeable is the creation of a number of fishing ponds to the south-east of the hall. There has also been extensive changes around the Marsh Lane area, south-east of Hampton-in-Arden. This area, once open fields, now contains a number of large ponds, with a cluster of small ponds directly adjacent to the A452 Kenilworth Road and south of Marsh Lane. This process can first be glimpsed on the 1980 mapping and probably resulted from mineral extraction and subsequent restoration, though this area has always been low-lying and prone to flood. This establishment of large ponds can also be seen to the east of the A452 Kenilworth Road around Cornets End Lane, where a number of ponds are located, again a result of mineral extraction and restoration.
- 5.1.16 The analysis of the historic maps for this area shows that in broad terms, very little has changed within the study area, especially when it can be compared with the transformation of areas such as Castle Bromwich and Birmingham throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The settlements of Balsall Common and Hampton-in-Arden have experienced the greatest changes and the arrival of the railway in the area provided a new, linear corridor through the study area, however, the large expanses of agricultural land, isolated farmsteads and detached moated manor sites all are extant today.

6 Historic landscape

6.1 Historic landscape characterisation

- 6.1.1 The landscape of the study area is largely rural. The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) for this area carried out by the HER shows that the most common broad historic landscape category represented is that of fieldscapes, dotted with small settlements and blocks of woodland, both designated ancient woodland and more recent plantations. There are a variety of narrower field types within the study area, with piecemeal enclosure appearing in the south-east and patches of planned enclosure scattered throughout. Remnants of formal parklands are well-preserved around Berkswell and the grade II* registered park and garden of Packington Hall is situated in the northern part of the study area. The evidence of the medieval landscape is preserved in the number of moated sites that are located in the study area. In addition, the medieval and post-medieval agricultural landscape is particularly well-preserved in the eastern part of the study area near Beechwood. A substantial number of hedgerows depicted on 19th century tithe maps and 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps are preserved in this area in particular, with remnants of these older hedgerows and field patterns also surviving throughout the study area. There has been relatively little modern development within this landscape, with the exception of the construction of the Rugby to Birmingham railway, which runs through the study area from north-west to south-east and the A452 Kenilworth Road, which form a modern linear feature on this landscape. The settlements within the study area largely retain their medieval and post-medieval layouts, being small, nucleated villages or individual farmsteads. Exceptions to this are the village of Hampton-in-Arden and the town of Balsall Common, both of which have railway stations located within their boundaries and have developed as commuting towns.
- 6.1.2 This study area lies within 'National Character Area (NCA) 97: Arden', as identified by Natural England. The study area lies in the central region of this NCA, which is described as low-lying with gently rolling hills and fragmented woodland. The River Blythe flows through the study area creating a wide, shallow river valley. This has formed rich agricultural soils in some areas, while other areas remain marshy and wet, perhaps because of the clay and mudstone superficial geology present in this area. The marshy nature of this area has gone some way to shape its historical development. The area remained as dense woodland until the early medieval to medieval period, as the heavy and wet soils meant that it would not make good agricultural land. There may have been possible small-scale clearances in the prehistoric period for seasonal grazing within the nutrient-rich marshy ground, but it is unlikely that the lower ground that follows the route of the A452 Kenilworth Road was used for settlement. Possible evidence for prehistoric activity has been located near Siden Hill Wood, an area of designated ancient woodland, in the form of cropmark. There is also a possible hillfort directly west of the North Warwickshire Golf Club and north of a gravel pit, off the B4102 Meriden Road and A452 Kenilworth Road, 200m south-east of the River Blythe. The hillfort is located on an area of higher ground, slightly overlooking the river valley, which may have been a less marshy site, where woodland clearance would have clear benefits.

- 6.1.3 The 1812 Hampton-in-Arden Enclosure (sic) map shows the area to the east of the village and south of Patrick Bridge as a marshy area with field names such as "Lea Meadow", "Twelveacre Meadow" and "The Oaks". Modern mapping still shows the study area containing a large number of ponds, in particular around Hampton-in-Arden and to the east, around Cornets End Lane. Both areas are described as floodplain on the HLC (HSL473, HSL472). The names of woodlands and settlements within the study area reflect the marshy and non-agricultural nature - The Bogs, Bradnock Marsh, Marsh Lane and Marsh House Farm. As the land rises at the eastern end of the study area, remnants of marshland reduce and arable farmland increases. The wet and marshy nature of the lower river valley parts of the study area, in particular around the A452 Kenilworth Road and east of Hampton-in-Arden indicate that this area was not suitable for settlement. The modern landscape reflects this, with large areas given over to ponds and woodland, indicating that the archaeological potential for this area is lower than the higher ground to the east of the A452 Kenilworth Road and further south in the study area.
- 6.1.4 The study area once lay within the Forest of Arden. The heavily wooded nature of this landscape has meant that, traditionally, it has seen low populations and low density of settlement. The beginning of woodland clearance has been mentioned above in relation to the boggy and marshy nature of parts of the study area. These initial clearances, although representing the first substantial change in this wooded landscape, did not constitute a significant reduction in the area of woodland. At the time of the Domesday Survey (1086), 35% of north-west Warwickshire was wooded. All of the villages recorded in the Domesday Survey that fall within the study area are listed as containing woodland, in some cases substantial amounts. During the medieval period, the forest was gradually assarted (cleared of areas of woodland) to create moated sites. The process of assarting increased during the post-medieval period, when the timber was being used for construction, charcoal production and to fuel industrial processes. Pockets of designated ancient woodland were preserved within the boundaries of designed parklands in the post-medieval period with six areas (The Bogs East, The Bogs North, The Bogs, Church Wood North, Church Wood East and an unnamed parcel lining Lavender Hall Lane) preserved at Berkswell, where they were combined with deliberately planted woodland to assist in the pursuit of fox and rabbit hunting as well as for the breeding of game birds for seasonal shoots. An example of this is the broad-leaved plantation of Sixteen Acre Wood combining with a parcel of designated ancient woodland within The Bogs adjacent to this.
- 6.1.5 Evidence for the use of small clumps of woodland in hunting can be found in the names, in particular those ending in Covert or Spinney. There are very few of these surviving within the study area; these include Mill Covert, east of Mercote Mill Farm, Coronation Spinney, near Marsh Farm and Park Lane Spinney, which bounds the southern extent of the Berkswell Estate. This may be a result of woodland clearance, which continued throughout the 20th century for new infrastructure and construction, a practise that has gradually declined.
- 6.1.6 There are a further three areas of ancient woodland preserved within the study area, located to the west of Hampton-in-Arden and known as Siden Hill Wood, with the remaining two areas located to the north of Reeves Green. These areas of ancient woodland may exist within more modern plantations, but their existence provides a glimpse into what would have been a heavily wooded river valley until the medieval period, and even then, any change would have been gradual.

- 6.1.7 The recording of a number of the settlements within the study area in the Domesday Survey indicates their existence as taxable farmsteads by 1066. The settlements were probably established in the early medieval period, when the study area was part of the Hwiccan kingdom, which then became part of the kingdom of Mercia. Place-name evidence demonstrates the occupation of the area at that time; such as Balsall meaning 'Baell(i)'s nook of land/small valley', Berkswell meaning 'Be(o)rcol's spring/stream', Hampton-in-Arden meaning 'high farm/settlement in the forest of Arden' and Meriden meaning 'pleasant valley'.
- 6.1.8 A number of the manors or settlements noted at the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 became the seats of larger estates, such as Berkswell, Barston, Diddington, Packington and Meriden. Deer parks were established at Packington and Berkswell in the medieval period, which helped to form the boundaries of the later estates. The establishment and location of these deer parks was associated with manor houses and their creation would have removed large areas of land from possible agricultural use.
- 6.1.9 In this area of Warwickshire, it has already been demonstrated that good agricultural land was hard to find, particularly in the area near Packington and to the west of Berkswell. In these locations large areas of land were removed from possible cultivation. This then not only explains the relative lack of medieval and post-medieval field boundaries within these estates, Packington in particular, but also demonstrates that the deer parks were used as a status symbol. The conspicuous waste of good agricultural land was a sign of wealth and status, the same way as moated estates were viewed in the earlier part of the medieval period.
- 6.1.10 The manor of Berkswell was established by 1325, with the park in existence by 1557. This park pale defines the area of designed historic landscape as identified by the HLC. Although the park pale helps to define the limits of the formal parkland associated with the hall, the extent of the Berkswell estate can be seen from the sale catalogue of 1888. This lists the houses, farms and land involved in and located within the estate and includes Lavender Hall Farm, Home Farm, Marsh Farm, the estate at Mercote Hall, which also included Mercote Mill and Park Farm, and Ram Hall Farm. The estate was purchased in 1888 by Joshua Hirst Wheatley. The current estate is characterised by open parkland, centred on the 19th century Berkswell Hall. The estate and house were sold in 1984 for development, though the Wheatley family retain control of some of the surrounding land. The sale of parts of the estate has led to a change in the landscape of the area, as parts of the estate have been sold to gravel extraction companies, with active quarries to the north of Mercote Mill Farm.
- 6.1.11 In addition to the larger estates, many smaller estates and land holdings were established at the same time as the woodland clearances in the medieval period. Indeed, the woodland clearances were in part a deliberate move to colonise the area with manors and moated houses, such as those at Ram Hall, Moat House in Hampton-in-Arden, Moat House Farm northwest of Carol Green and Mercote in Berkswell, with the mansions of Diddington Hall and Lavender Hall established in the 16th century. The isolated and individual manors and moated sites were joined by hamlets at Hampton-in-Arden, Balsall Common, Barston, as well as the associated village at Berkswell, during the medieval period.

- 6.1.12 As noted above, the large-scale woodland clearances of the early medieval and medieval period increased capacity for arable farming. Evidence for this progression and agricultural use of this landscape can be found in the 32 areas of ridge-and-furrow that are present throughout the study area, and a possible hay stack stand located south-east of Ram Hall. There are no examples of medieval field systems within the study area; however, there are distinct, preserved areas of planned enclosure dating from the 18th and 19th centuries to the east of Balsall Common, to the south of Berkswell, to the east of Bradnocks Marsh and to the west of the A452 Kenilworth Road south of Marsh Lane. These areas of planned enclosure coincide with the majority of the historic hedgerows and a number of important hedgerows, as designated by the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.
- 6.1.13 The historic hedgerows are the boundaries that appear on early mapping from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and which are still shown on modern mapping today. They do not meet the archaeological criteria for the Hedgerows Regulations in that they do not mark a parish boundary, are not associated with an archaeological asset or are not named on any catalogue or database maintained by the historic environment team. They are, therefore, not designated. They do, however, help to identify areas of planned enclosure and they do help to show where the historic landscape has been preserved. Within the study area, this can clearly be seen. The swathe of land stretching from Little Beanit Farm in the south to Berkswell in the north contains a large number of historic hedgerows, preserving the line of the older field boundaries. The areas in this zone are labelled as “piecemeal enclosure” and “re-organised piecemeal enclosure”. These types of fields were created out of the open medieval field system and retain some medieval qualities, such as sinuous ‘S-shaped’ boundaries. The re-organised piecemeal enclosure comprises fields where boundaries have been removed since the late 19th and early 20th centuries to create larger fields. This zone of fieldscapes and historic hedgerows shows that the historic landscape of this area is well-preserved and easily legible.
- 6.1.14 The historic landscape of this area also contains remnants of small-scale rural industry, which is noted by a windmill north-east of Mercote Mill Farm and the watermills within the Mercote Estate. The post-medieval rural economy is otherwise represented by small-scale farms and their associated farmhouses, such as Beechwood Farm, Mouldings Green, Barratts Lane Farmhouse and Pasture Farmhouse. More elaborate farmsteads were also established, with substantial halls at Ram Hall, Diddington Hall and adjacent Diddington Farmhouse, and Lavender Hall. All expanded in the 17th century, with large barns, to form farm complexes. The agricultural setting of these complexes survives largely unaltered.
- 6.1.15 More substantial settlements developed in the 16th and 17th centuries, often as an expansion of existing manors. Berkswell survives largely unaltered, while others such as Hampton-in-Arden have continued to expand. The character of Hampton-in-Arden changed significantly as a result of the work of W. E. Nesfield. Nesfield was a prominent architect of the 19th century and was employed by Sir Frederick Peel to modernise the village.

- 6.1.16 The study area avoided much of the industrialisation of the landscape initiated by the coal extraction industry in the 19th and 20th centuries; however, small-scale industrial activity did take place throughout the area. The 1812 Hampton-in-Arden enclosure map identifies a number of small pits for the extraction of ash or brick clay and a brick field marked to the north of the village, while the first edition Ordnance Survey map notes a sand pit near Bradnocks Marsh. The geology of glaciofluvial sands and gravels and the clays and silts of this area would have made it attractive for localised clay extraction for brick making, marl extraction and small-scale gravel quarrying. The higher land of the southern portion of the study area means that the greater concentration of sands and gravels are found in the northern portion of the study area. The southern portion of the study area, therefore, has not been subject to much activity, and thus preserves much of its medieval and post-medieval landscape character.
- 6.1.17 The arrival of the railway cutting along the Blythe Valley marked the most dramatic alteration of this historic landscape and had the effect of transforming the landscape. Warwickshire occupied a critical position, with railway development running through the county. This is represented by the existing Rugby to Birmingham rail line, part of the former LBR of 1838. Stations were built at Berkswell (near to Balsall Common) and at Hampton-in-Arden, both of which are still in use. Within the study area, the Kenilworth to Berkswell branch of the LNWR passes through Beechwood towards Berkswell Station. This was opened to passengers in 1884, and was closed to passengers in 1965. The placement of stations at Hampton-in-Arden and Berkswell, near to Balsall Common, may have provided the stimulus for the settlement growth seen in these two areas in the inter-war period. The majority of the settlements within the study area have largely retained their small, nucleated layouts, situated along roads. Balsall Common and Hampton-in-Arden; however have expanded far beyond their medieval limits. Without the stimulus of a colliery or other industrial site, which would have encouraged all of the settlements to grow exponentially, the siting of the railway stations allowed these towns to become satellite villages for people to commute to London, or Birmingham, and beyond. This gradual growth can be seen on the historic OS mapping of the area.
- 6.1.18 In conclusion, the only significant modern developments that have taken place within the study area are those related to transport and communication. The marshy and wooded nature of the study area has dictated to a large extent the development of settlement, with isolated farmsteads and nucleated settlements being the characteristic form. The lack of any large-scale developments or industrial activity means that the historic landscape in this area is well-preserved and retains much of its historic legibility. Even in areas where the historic landscape has been removed by the expansion of settlement, such as at Hampton-in-Arden or Balsall Common, the legibility of this transformation can be understood through analysis. The ability to understand the agricultural history of this landscape, in particular in the southern portion of the study area, and the pattern of medieval and post-medieval settlement, has largely been preserved and can be easily appreciated by any observer.

6.2 Historic parks and gardens

- 6.2.1 There are three parks and gardens within the study area that are not formally designated or recognised within the HER, but which exhibit features of significance from a heritage point of view.

- 6.2.2 The first is Berkswell House. This is the site of a house and its associated gardens that first appears on the 1904 OS map, bounded by Truggist Lane to the west, north and east and by the Rugby to Birmingham railway to the south. The boundary of the garden has remained unchanged from its first appearance to present day. Although not of great age, or a particularly picturesque example, the garden remains a preserved historic asset. The setting of the garden is defined by its relationship with the house which has been preserved.
- 6.2.3 The second garden to be identified is Moat House Farm. The farmhouse has been situated on the site of moat and the building within dates from the 1600s, possibly using even older material. The farmhouse is surrounded by the well-preserved moat. The 1841 Berkswell tithe map does not particularly demarcate a boundary around the building or identify a particular designed landscape. The field surrounding the property is labelled as "garden" with an accompanying orchard, but the wider surrounding fields (as demarcated in the 1887 OS map) are simply labelled as "croft", "upper borough" and "paddock". The orchard is shown on the OS map, which also shows a better-defined area of land associated with Moat House Farm. There has been a slight alteration of the field boundaries, in particular to the west of the building, but this is only a minor change. The plan of Moat House Farm is shown in detail on the 1906 estate plan undertaken for Joshua Wheatley; however, it shows no sign of a formal garden layout, but the field boundaries are the same as shown on the 1887 OS map, demarcating it from the surrounding land. This plan remains intact today and is therefore, a heritage asset. The relationship of the garden to the house remains legible.
- 6.2.4 The third locally important park and garden is that at Mercote Hall, however, this particular example has seen the boundaries of its designed garden infilled with trees and subject to minor changes. The first hall to appear at Mercote was probably constructed in the medieval period and was most likely on the site of the later hall, if not the original medieval manor. Given the antiquity of this house, it is difficult to establish the extent of the original parkland and associated land. The 1841 Berkswell tithe map shows that some of the boundaries are the same, and the current boundary matches that shown on the 1st edition OS map of 1887. The plan also matches the detailed plan of Mercote Hall drawn up in 1906 when Joshua Wheatley sold the estate. This plan also shows some detail of the formal gardens, but the extent of survival of these is unknown due to the extensive tree growth. This asset is reduced in value due to the fact that only its boundary survives, with no remains of the building or the formal garden. This loss of any tangible relationship to the house has also reduced the significance of its setting,

6.3 Historic hedgerows

- 6.3.1 Within the study area, 13 hedgerows identified as historically important under the archaeology and history criteria of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 have been identified.
- 6.3.2 Five hedgerows - BHA267, BHA268, BHA269, BHA270 and BHA271 are all located in the fields immediately surrounding Ram Hall. Hedgerow BHA271 is approximately 30m long and one to two metres in height and width. It is located to the west of Ram Hall. It is a moderately diverse hedge dominated by hawthorn with frequent hazel. Less than half the length of the hedgerow is a fence.

- 6.3.3 Hedgerow BHA270 is also located to the west of Ram Hall and is 150m long and one to two metres in height and width. It is a moderately diverse hedgerow with a fence running for less than half its length.

- 6.3.4 Hedgerow BHA269 has the same statistics as BHA270. All three hedgerows are not important for the ecological criteria but do meet the archaeological criteria in that they are associated with the ridge-and-furrow field system recorded in the HER (BHA049). Hedgerows BHA267 and BHA268 are located to the north of Ram Hall. They are both species-poor hedgerows, approximately 180m in length. They are approximately one to two metres in height and width. Both of these hedgerows contain a fence for less than half of their length. They do not meet the ecological criteria but are both associated with the non-designated asset of ridge-and-furrow and field systems identified in the HER (BHA049).

- 6.3.5 Hedgerow BHA050 is located to the west of Diddington Lane, south of the Shadow Brook. The hedge is 235m long and one to two metres in height and width. It is a species-rich hedgerow with dominant hawthorn and occasional elder, rose and bramble. This hedgerow is actively maintained. It meets the ecological criteria for importance but also the archaeological criteria through its association with an asset of ridge-and-furrow and field systems (BHA217).

- 6.3.6 Hedgerow BHA153 is approximately 100m in length, two to three metres in height and one to two metres wide. It is located to the south of Diddington Hall. The hedge is a species-poor mix with elm, bramble and hawthorn. The hedge has a surviving ditch bordering one side. It does not meet the criteria for an ecologically important hedgerow but its connections with the ridge-and-furrow and field system recorded in the HER (BHA193) and the connection with the Diddington Estate means that it fits the criteria for an archaeologically important hedgerow.

- 6.3.7 Hedgerow BHA232 is located directly adjacent to the east of BHA153 and to the south of Diddington Hall, abutting the A452 Kenilworth Road. This hedge is a similar length, width and height but is species-rich with three mature oak, ash, crack willow with a canopy of blackthorn, bramble elder rose and more species. A wet ditch borders one side of the hedgerow. This is also connected with the HER asset of ridge-and-furrow (BHA193) and the field system to which this belongs, along with the wider Diddington Estate. It therefore also meets the archaeological requirements.

- 6.3.8 Hedgerow BHA097 is located to the north of the Shadow Brook, west of Diddington Hall. It is a species-rich example with mixed hawthorn and frequent dogrose, bramble and rare elm. The hedge is 60m in length and two to four metres in height and one to two metres wide. The hedgerow is not complete and is a fence line for less than half of its length. This hedgerow does not meet the criteria for importance for ecology but is associated with the Diddington Hall estate and the ridge-and-furrow identified in the HER (BHA218) and therefore meets the criteria for archaeological importance.

- 6.3.9 Hedgerow BHA256 is located to the north of Shadow Brook, to the south of Pasture Farm. It is connected on its eastern end to hedgerow BHA245. Hedge BHA256 is 215m in length and two to four metres in height. Is up to three metres wide and a moderately species-diverse hedgerow with associated hedgebank and dry ditch. It meets the criteria for ecological importance and archaeological importance through its association with an area of ridge-and furrow-identified within the HER (BHA223).

- 6.3.10 Hedgerow BHA245 is 168m long and over four metres in height. It is two to three metres in width and therefore a substantial hedge. It is a moderately species-diverse hedgerow with a number of mature trees with a dry ditch and good connectivity. It is important for ecological reasons and it is also associated with the non-designated asset of ridge-and-furrow identified on the HER (BHA223). It therefore also meets the criteria for archaeological importance.

- 6.3.11 The final two hedgerows, BHA251 and BHA080 are located to the west of Pasture Farm at the northern end of the study area and connect at the eastern end of BHA251 and western end of BHA080. BHA251 is 82m long and over four metres in height. It is a species-rich hedgerow with good connectivity with occasional hazel, hawthorn, rose and oak. BHA080 is 57m in length and again, over four metres in height. This is also a species-rich hedgerow containing five young oaks with oak throughout the hedgerow as well as rose, hazel, field maple and spindle. This hedgerow also acts as a garden boundary. Both hedgerows meet the importance criteria for ecological reasons and both are associated with the non-designated asset of ridge-and-furrow within the HER (BHA223). They both, therefore, meet the archaeological criteria.

7 Archaeological character

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 To determine the archaeological potential for the study area, it was sub-divided into archaeological character areas (ACA). These ACAs are derived from a consideration of the current topography, geology and land use of the area. From these factors the potential for recovery of archaeological remains is considered.

7.1.2 From these broad character areas, the landscape was further sub-divided into archaeological sub-zones (ASZ) (see Volume 5: maps CH-03-151b to CH-03-154), which have allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the archaeological potential of the study area. The study area for the Balsall Common to Hampton-in-Arden area has been sub-divided into 24 ASZs and a description of all ASZs is presented in Table 2. Although initially defined and characterised by current land use, a number of additional factors have determined the potential of these sub-zones to contain archaeological remains of significance. These factors include topography, geology, historic character and distribution of known archaeological finds, sites and assets.

7.2 Character areas

7.2.1 The ACAs described in the following, extend from south-east to north-west within the study area.

Archaeological Character Area 001 – Preserved field boundaries and till: south of Balsall Common

7.2.2 The southern portion of the ACA lies on the rising ground moving away from the valley floor of the River Blythe and the various brooks flowing from it. As the ACA moves south away from the valley, the geology changes from glacio-fluvial and alluvial sands and gravels to till deposits. This also marks a change from the marshier land further north and would have been a more attractive choice for early woodland clearance due to the more favourable agricultural conditions. This is reflected in this ACA, which comprises a swathe of land stretching from the A4177 in the south-west to the south of Berkswell to the north-east and occupies the entire width of the ACA. The characteristic of this area is the preservation of the historic landscape, in particular preservation of the agricultural land, medieval and post-medieval farmsteads and road pattern. This area also contains a large number of moats, which are still legible within the landscape.

Archaeological Character Area 002 – Urban settlement: Balsall Common

7.2.3 This ACA encompasses the modern extent of the settlement of Balsall Common. It has been noted in the historic landscape narrative above that Balsall Common expanded as a result of the transport links and the railway station. It is also located on the higher ground rising from the Blythe Valley, and as such, would have been more attractive to early settlement and woodland clearance. This ACA does not retain any historic characteristics.

Archaeological Character Area 003 – Wider Berkswell Estate

- 7.2.4 Contained within this ACA is the more compact boundary of the Berkswell estate (ACA004). ACA003, however, contains the more agricultural aspects of the estate, along with large blocks of plantation, some containing remnants of ancient woodland. The wider estate contains the individual estate farms and cottages and is also characterised by a lack of roads. The farmsteads are linked by local farm tracks, which have not been upgraded. The estate also contains a number of large halls, including Lavender Hall, Ram Hall and Mercote Hall, with a number of these located on or near medieval moated sites. The estate is located on the eastern slope of the Blythe valley and gradually rises to the east, from 90 to 130m AOD.

Archaeological Character Area 004 – Berkswell Estate

- 7.2.5 The core of the Berkswell Estate has been identified as a separate ACA, as it is more likely to preserve elements related to a designed and ornamental landscape. The park pale is preserved within this ACA, providing a useful limit to the south-western extent. The ACA is fairly typical of a designed landscape, with an ornamental lake and blocks of woodland and ribbons of plantations lining the boundaries of the park. Berkswell Hall is located on the rising ground to the east at 110m AOD with views along the valley created by Bayleys Brook to the south.

Archaeological Character Area 005 – Glaciofluvial and till deposits within an area of glacial lake deposits

- 7.2.6 This ACA is located to the north of Balsall Common and west of the A452 Kenilworth Road. The ACA includes Bradnocks Marsh and comprises undulating ground sloping down to the River Blythe to the west at 90m AOD. There are a number of small ponds and tributaries flowing through this ACA and the place names indicate that the area has historically been marshy. The geology of the ACA indicates the presence of a lake in the area immediately north of Needlers End, and therefore, indicates the potential for prehistoric activity on the higher ground. This ACA retains some of its historic landscape; however, possibly due to the wetland nature of the area, it does not appear to have been subject to large-scale planned enclosure. There is little preservation of medieval and post-medieval landscape here, but nor is the large-scale alteration of the landscape through extraction and creation of artificial ponds that has taken place in adjacent ACAs evident.

Archaeological Character Area 006 – Blythe Valley

- 7.2.7 The swathe of land running from the west below Hampton-in-Arden across the width of the ACA to the east is characterised by large, artificial lakes and occasional areas of mineral extraction. The River Blythe flows through this ACA, with the flat, low-lying topography being indicative of a floodplain of a river valley. The character area slopes from 113m AOD at the highest point in the west down to 85m AOD at the valley floor, returning to 100m AOD to the east. The geology of the ACA reflects the river valley position. The area around the River Blythe is marked as alluvial deposits of clays and silts, with river terrace sands and gravels to the west. There are glaciofluvial sands and gravels as the ground moves away from the valley floor, but there is no trace of the till deposits found in the ACAs further south. This ACA contains a number of large artificial lakes, probably resulting from the extraction of sands and gravels and later reinstatement and infilling of pits with water.
- 7.2.8 This ACA is also characterised by a lack of field boundaries, which is a result of a combination of the marshy nature of the area being unattractive for agriculture that would have limited planned enclosure, and also mineral extraction removing the boundaries during the works. Archaeological potential has been identified in this ACA through LiDAR analysis, which has identified pockets of ridge-and-furrow and possible enclosure at a low level within the valley floor, possibly indicating the use of this area on a seasonal basis. Possible prehistoric cropmarks have been identified at 90m AOD near Gravel Pit Plantation. Further prehistoric cropmarks have been identified to the west of the River Blythe, once again indicating possible seasonal use of the river valley.

Archaeological Character Area 007 – Urban settlement: Hampton-in-Arden

- 7.2.9 The modern settlement of Hampton-in-Arden also contains the remnants of the medieval historic core of Hampton-in-Arden including the moated site and former manor. The settlement at Hampton-in-Arden expanded from its medieval origins in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with the arrival of the railway. It is located on an area of high ground, at 115m AOD, overlooking the River Blythe.

Archaeological Character Area 008 – Alluvial Deposits: Diddington Hall

- 7.2.10 This ACA encompasses the northern slopes of the River Blythe valley and the Shadow Brook valley. The area is relatively flat at 95-100m AOD, with the drift geology not recorded here. Although probably still subject to flooding from the Shadow Brook and the River Blythe, it is more likely that flooding would have affected the area to the south, leading to the establishment of the medieval settlement at Diddington, with the adjacent Diddington Hall. This ACA preserves many more historic field boundaries, with remnants of planned enclosure around Diddington Hall. Use of LiDAR has also identified a number of features within the floodplain of the Shadow Brook and around Diddington, indicating a higher level of archaeological potential than the valley floor to the south.

7.3 Archaeological sub-zones

- 7.3.1 The ASZ are presented in Table 2 from east to west within the study area. Plans showing the sub-zones can be found in Volume 5: Maps CH-03-151b to CH-03-154.

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Table 2: Archaeological sub zones

No.	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic Landscape Character	Archaeology
23-01	Land west of Hodgett's Lane	Slight valley slope from 125mAOD down to 115mAOD back to 15mAOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays, sands and gravels with possible river terrace sands and gravels	Agriculture, settlements, transport	Small rectilinear fields, large irregular fields, farm complex pre 1888	Various areas of ridge and furrow have been identified here with possible palaeo-environmental evidence in the river alluvium
23-02	Beechwood Farm	Sloping from south to north from 125m to 110m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with alluvial clays and silts and till - Diamicton	Agricultural land	Planned enclosure, large rectilinear fields, paddock, very large post war field, farm complex	No archaeological remains in this sub-zone, located on higher ground overlooking river valley with well-preserved HLC. LiDAR analysis has identified possible features in this zone. Potential for medieval or prehistoric remains
23-03	Transport networks	Varies across the study area, general sloping down from south to north from 120m to 80mAOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with alluvial clays and silts and till - Diamicton, with glaciofluvial and river terrace deposits also present throughout the study area	Transport	Transportation	The line of the A452 follows the route of older roads in the area, but the upgrading will have removed earlier deposits. The West Coast mainline runs through the area and was once joined with a branch line of the London and Northwest Railway. This line is now removed, but a visible feature in the landscape.
23-04	Moat at Moat House Farm	Level higher ground 125mAOD.	Mercia mudstone group overlain with till - Diamicton	Agriculture and settlement	Re-organised piecemeal enclosure, large irregular fields, settlement	Moat located here with possible associated settlement evidence to be found in close proximity.
23-05	Ridge and furrow around Barratts Lane Farm	Sloping down west to east from 125m to 110mAOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with river terrace sands and gravels	Agricultural land	Planned enclosure	Large areas of ridge and furrow identified in this zone and the well-preserved historic landscape indicate the potential for archaeological remains associated with river terrace sands and gravels exists.

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No.	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic Landscape Character	Archaeology
23-06	Berkswell House	Sloping east to west from 120m to 110m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial till, alluvial clays and silts	House and garden	Large irregular fields, Country House	This house first appears on the 1904 OS map with a clearly defined garden and designed grounds. These remain intact today and my preserve medieval agricultural features
23-07	Land east of Baulk Lane	Sloping river valley at 120m sloping to 110m AOD at valley floor	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural land	Piecemeal enclosure, floodplain	Areas of ridge and furrow have been identified with the potential for further archaeological deposits to be present
23-08	Land around Berkswell Station	110m AOD, relatively flat	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts	Recreational fishing lake	Fishery	Archaeological deposits will have been removed by the creation of the fishing lakes and the train tracks
23-09	Urban conurbation Balsall Common	Situated on high ground approximately 125m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with till - Diamicton	Settlement	Post-1955 detached settlement	Balsall was in existence by the 11th century and therefore may contain earlier evidence.
23-10	River terrace deposits and ridge and Furrow near Lavender Hall	Slopes down to Bayleys Brook from 115m to 110m AOD.	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial till, alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural land	Other large rectilinear fields, floodplain	This area is associated with Lavender Hall and LiDAR analysis has identified a number of potential features including possible ridge and furrow
23-11	Ridge and furrow and moated site at Ram Hall	115m to 110mAOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial till,	Agricultural land	Other large rectilinear fields, paddocks and closes	The moated site at Ram Hall lies partially within this zone and LiDAR has identified potential features in this location.
23-12	Land south of Berkswell	Sloping from east to west, from 125m to 115m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with till - Diamicton	Agricultural land	Planned enclosure, re-organised piecemeal enclosure, large rectilinear fields	Area of ridge and furrow has been identified here and the preserved historic filed systems indicate potential for archaeological deposits to survive. Location overlooking the river valley also indicates potential from prehistoric archaeology to remain

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No.	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic Landscape Character	Archaeology
23-13	Glacio-fluvial deposits west of Park Lane	105m to 110m AOD gently sloping from north to south	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial sands and gravels and till - Diamicton	Agricultural land	Very large post-war fields, other rectilinear fields	Zone located to the south of the park pale of Berkswell and within the wider estate. Areas of ridge and furrow have been identified from the HER
23-14	Parkland at Berkswell	110m to 100m AOD from south to north	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial sands and gravels and till - Diamicton	Agricultural land and woodland	Mixed plantation, other small rectilinear fields, other large rectilinear fields	Zone located within the parkland of Berkswell. Possibility of preserved deposits, but nothing has been identified on LiDAR or on the HER
23-15	Glaciofluvial sands and gravel west of Sixteen Acre Wood	Fairly flat, approximately 100m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial till, sands and gravels,	Agricultural	Other large rectilinear fields	Zone located to south of Sixteen Acre Wood. No LiDAR features or HER features.
23-16	Sands and gravels south of The Bogs	Gentle slope from south-west to north-east from 100m at north-east to 105m AOD in south-west	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial sands and gravels,	Agricultural land	Other large rectilinear field, broad-leaved plantation	No archaeological features have been identified, however there is the potential for palaeo-environmental deposits around the valley of the brook
23-17	The Bogs	Flat brook valley bottom at 100m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts	Woodland	Floodplain, replanted ancient woodland	This is an area of ancient woodland and may preserve earlier deposits or evidence of features within the woodland. There may be preserved palaeo-environmental evidence near the brook
23-18	Land around Coronation Spinney	Fairly flat at 95m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial sands and gravels,	Agricultural land, woodland	Large rectilinear fields, extraction	Possible archaeological features remain in the southern portion of this area, but it is likely to have been removed by modern quarrying activity

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No.	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic Landscape Character	Archaeology
23-19	Alluvial clays and silts east of Marsh Farm	Fairly flat, 95m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural	Floodplain	LiDAR analysis has identified a number of possible features within this zone and the marshy nature of the area indicates the potential for palaeo-environmental remains to exist
23-20	Glaciofluvial sands and gravel and possible ridge and furrow south of Marsh Farm	Gentle slope from south to north from 100m to 95m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial till, alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural	Other large rectilinear fields, floodplain	LiDAR has identified some possible features in this zone and it is situated overlooking the marshy low lying area and Bayleys Brook. Possibility of prehistoric archaeology in the zone
23-21	Sands and gravels east of the A452	Fairly flat at 95m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial sands and gravels,	Agricultural land	Large rectilinear fields	Adjacent to the Marsh Farm are, though with more disturbance from the A452. Possibility of the medieval features at Marsh Farm to extend southwards into this zone
23-22	Land east of the A452	Roughly flat at 95m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with river terrace sands and gravels	Agricultural land, commercial, transport	Planned enclosure, paddocks and closes	Ridge and furrow has been identified within this area, but there has been significant disturbance through the construction of the railway line and cutting.
23-23	Marsh Farm medieval deposits	Fairly flat, 90m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial till, sands and gravels,	Agricultural and farmstead	Paddocks and closes, large irregular fields, farm complex pre-1888	Ridge and furrow has been identified in this area and the LiDAR has identified a number of potentially medieval features.
23-24	Mercote Hall	Flat, 90m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial till, sands and gravels,	Woodland	Broad-leaved plantation	This area is the site of Mercote Hall, now demolished. There is the potential for the foundations of the house to survive

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No.	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic Landscape Character	Archaeology
23-25	Glaciofluvial deposits east of A452	Gentle slope from south to north from 95m to 90m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial till, sands and gravels,	Agricultural	Very large post-war fields, other rectilinear fields	Area may have been subject to gravel extraction but cropmarks have been identified here of possible prehistoric origin
23-26	Man-made lakes west of the A452	Flat at 85m AOD in the valley floor of the River Blythe	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts and glacial sands and gravels	Water features	Artificial lakes	The creation of these lakes through gravel extraction and the management of the marshland around the River Blythe valley means there is negligible potential for archaeological deposits survive
23-27	Sand and gravel pits south of Cornets End Lane	Fairly flat at 95m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts and glacial sands and gravels	Rough grazing, woodland	Sand and gravel extraction	Some archaeological features are noted here but it is likely they have been removed by modern quarrying
23-28	Clays and silts east of A452	Flat at 90m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural	Piecemeal enclosure	No archaeological features in this zone, however possible potential for palaeo-environmental deposits
23-29	Siden Hill Wood	Slight slope from 98m to 90m AOD overlooking the River Blythe	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts	Woodland	Broad-leaved ancient woodland	An area of ancient woodland, it may hold evidence of earlier features and of woodland industries such as charcoal production
23-30	Possible palaeoenvironmental assets south of Patrick Farm	Slightly undulating from 90m to 95m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glaciofluvial sands and gravels and river terrace sands and gravels	Agricultural	Very large irregular fields	LiDAR has identified a number of possible features associated with use of the River Blythe
23-31	Sands and gravels south of Patrick Farm	Flat at 90m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial sands and gravels, alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural	Very large post-war fields, Floodplain	No archaeological assets present in this zone, however possibility of palaeo-environmental deposits adjacent to watercourse

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No.	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic Landscape Character	Archaeology
23-32	Clays and silts east of Patrick Farm	Fairly flat at 95m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural land	Piecemeal enclosure	A number of features have been identified here through LiDAR and the remnants of the historic field system and the alluvium indicates the potential for archaeological deposits to remain
23-33	Iron Age cropmarks west and north of Hornbrook Farm	Sloping west to east, 95m to 90m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial sands and gravels,	Agricultural	Broad-leaved plantation, Paddocks and closes, large rectilinear fields	Possible cropmarks of Iron Age enclosures and hillfort in this zone
23-34	Sands and gravel pits north of Cornets End Lane	Fairly flat at 90m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial sands and gravels,	Rough grazing	Sand and gravel extraction	No archaeological features are noted here and it is likely that sand and gravel extraction will have removed all archaeological deposits
23-35	Lands south of Molands Bridge	Roughly flat at 90m AOD slightly overlooking the River Blythe	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial sands and gravels and river terrace sands	Recreational land	Golf course	Prehistoric archaeological features have been identified here, but the landscaping associated with the golf course may have removed these.
23-36	River terrace sands and gravels north of Meriden Road	Slight slope from 90m down to River Blythe at 85m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with river terrace sands and gravels and alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural	Floodplain	No archaeological sites within the zone but adjacent to site of possible watermill and within floodplain therefore there may be potential for palaeoenvironmental deposits
23-37	Land east of Hampton-in-Arden	Slight slope from west at 90m to east at 85m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with river terrace sands and gravels	Recreational land	Industrial, large rectilinear fields	Archaeological features of a former ammunition depot and ridge and furrow are identified within this zone, there is some potential for further recovery of archaeological deposits

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No.	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic Landscape Character	Archaeology
23-38	Clays and silts at Meriden Mill Farm	Valley floor of the River Blythe at 85m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural land	Floodplain	The location on the river valley and association with the Meriden watermill indicates potential for the recovery of archaeological deposits.
23-39	Urban conurbation – Hampton-in-Arden	95m rising westwards to 100m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with river terrace sands and gravels	Settlement	Post-1900 settlement	Hampton-in-Arden was in existence prior to the 11th century and there may be deposits associated with the early settlement and later expansion, but these are likely to have been removed
23-40	Clays and silts north of the River Blythe	Slight slope up from south to north from the River Blythe from 85m to 90m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with river terrace sands and gravels	Agricultural	Large rectilinear fields	No archaeological sites in this zone but within an area overlooking the River Blythe and therefore there is the potential for prehistoric deposits to survive
23-41	Glaciofluvial deposits north-west of Mouldings Green Farm	Slight rise in the centre of the zone to 95m from 90m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial sands and gravels,	Agricultural	Large rectilinear fields	Ridge and furrow has been observed within this zone and there is the potential for recovery of agricultural archaeological features and prehistoric deposits given the location of the zone overlooking the River Blythe.
23-42	Medieval features north of Hampton-in-Arden	Fairly flat, 95m to 90m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts and river terrace sands and gravels	Agricultural land	Reorganised piecemeal enclosure	A large area of ridge and furrow and many features identified from LiDAR have been identified here indicating the potential for archaeology associated with medieval Hampton-in-Arden
23-43	Clays and silts east of A452	Flat at 85m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural	Floodplain	No archaeological assets present in this zone. Location adjacent to the A452 means that most of the archaeology will have been removed

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No.	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic Landscape Character	Archaeology
23-44	Clays and silts west of Diddington Hall	Gently undulating at 85m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial sands and gravels, alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural	Large rectilinear fields, Floodplain	Ridge and furrow has been located in this area and the LiDAR has identified a number of features adjacent to Shadow Brook
23-45	Diddington Hall	Slightly undulating around 95m to 85m AOD from north to south across the site.	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural land	Country house, large rectilinear fields	There are extensive LiDAR features and archaeological features identified here associated with Diddington Hall. The potential for the recovery of archaeological deposits here is medium.
23-46	Clays and silts west of Diddington Lane	Sloping from south to north from 90m to 85m AOD to Shadow Brook	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural	Other large rectilinear fields	No archaeological assets identified in this zone, but LiDAR analysis has identified a small number of possible features leading down to the Shadow Brook
23-47	Land north of Shadow Brook	85m AOD in the valley of the Shadow Brook	Mercia mudstone overlain with alluvial clays and silts	Agricultural land	Floodplain, large rectilinear fields	A small number of LiDAR features have been identified next to the Shadow Brook and there may be potential for deposits relating to water management or palaeo-environmental remains to be extant
23-48	Sands and gravels east of Pasture Farm	Sloping upwards from 85m at Shadow Brook to 100m AOD	Mercia mudstone overlain with glacial sands and gravels	Agricultural	Floodplain, Planned enclosure	The medieval settlement of Diddington is partially located within this zone and therefore there is the potential for recovery of deposits linked with this.

8 Analysis and research potential

8.1 Analysis of understanding

- 8.1.1 This baseline report presents the heritage baseline data for the study area. The report identifies and describes assets located within study area and provides a narrative chronology using historic map evidence and documentary research.
- 8.1.2 Within the study area, 108 designated assets have been identified. The majority of these are listed buildings, with 93 being identified. The remaining assets include four scheduled monuments, three conservation areas and eight ancient woodlands.
- 8.1.3 The baseline report has identified archaeological evidence dating from the Neolithic period through to the 20th century. Neolithic evidence, consisting of flints, has previously been located during archaeological excavation. This was found in association with Bronze Age evidence that consisted of two concentric rings of post holes with an associated pit group. Evidence for funeral practice was noted, which consisted of urns and accessory vessels located within pits and post holes that were arranged in a roughly oval/circular shape. The same archaeological works also identified an Iron Age polygonal enclosure with double-opposed entrances, within which were three ring ditches were interpreted as house structures. This enclosure has been interpreted as a hillfort, although this is a tentative interpretation. Other evidence for prehistoric activity consists of chance finds, such as a looped Palsatve axe from Berkswell and burnt mounds east of Meriden quarry which are indicative of occupation. Apart from the evidence of Iron Age occupation, located at Meriden quarry, no other evidence of occupation has been located within study area.
- 8.1.4 During the prehistoric and Roman periods, the landscape within the study area was heavily wooded located, as it was within the Forest of Arden. This limited the potential for settlement, as woodland clearances would have involved a large amount of man power and resources.
- 8.1.5 Evidence for Roman activity has not been located within the study area, although extensive evidence for military activity is located within the surrounding region.
- 8.1.6 Evidence for early medieval occupation is dominated by place name evidence, although chance finds such as a silver coin from the area of Molands Bridge attest to activity during this period. This is further conformed by the suggestion that Berskwell was the centre of religious activity that centred on the existing church.

- 8.1.7 Extensive evidence for medieval occupation is present within the study area and is principally represented evidence of medieval agriculture in the form of ridge and furrow, with associated headlands, along with water meadows. Evidence for other utilisation of the landscape includes industrial purposes, such as the site of a windmill at Mercote Mill Farm. During the medieval period, the establishment of manors with associated manorial residence that was frequently moated, for example Moat House. The period also saw the establishment of deer parks; for example, that at Berkswell and Diddington Hall and large scale estates, the latter during the post medieval period, developing into extensive landholdings frequently containing formal design parks and gardens as seen at Diddington Hall.
- 8.1.8 During the medieval period the study area experienced growth in the settlements and the enclosure of the open field system particularly where these were in the control of large estates seeking to optimise the return from their land holdings. The changes that occurred were also accompanied by an increased utilisation of woodland as a source for raw material for building materials, which resulted in the clearance of much of the woodland that had previously been present.
- 8.1.9 The development of the study area during the post medieval period saw the introduction of turnpike roads which attracted the development of associated infrastructure within settlements. Industrial activity included the quarrying sand and gravel as well as clay for brick. This activity has continued into the 20th century. During the 19th century the establishment of the railways saw the further development of the transport infrastructure.
- 8.1.10 Unlike many other areas within the region the study area did not experience rapid and extensive urban growth during the 18th and 19th centuries and maintains much of its rural character with interspersed settlements.

8.2 Archaeological potential

- 8.2.1 Within the study area the dominant archaeological feature of the landscape is associated with medieval agricultural practise principally ridge and furrow. Despite this aspect there remains the potential for archaeology deposits of other periods to be present that have been obscured by the presence of the ridge and furrow.
- 8.2.2 Within the river valleys have the potential to contain waterlogged conditions that may preserve organic material including artefacts as well as palaeo-environmental indicators that would provide valuable data about past landscape and the utilisation of these.

8.3 Research potential and priorities

General

- to what extent can palaeo-environmental deposits that may be contained within river valleys, contribute to our understanding of past landscapes and the utilisation of these?
- to what extent is the presence of the extensive areas of ridge and furrow present within the study area creating a false representation of the nature and extent of occupation from

earlier periods?

- is it possible to identify any continuity of occupation and utilisation of the landscape beyond that already identified at Meriden Quarry?

Early and later prehistory

- within the study area there is a limited data relating to the prehistoric period other than that at Meriden Quarry and other isolated assets. To what extent is this a reflection of the true nature of the utilisation of the landscape during this period?

Romano-British

- there is a paucity of evidence for Romano-British activity within the CFA. To what extent is this a true reflection of the nature of activity during this period?

Early medieval

- evidence for early medieval activity is slight within the study area. Is this lack of evidence a true reflection of the nature of occupation at this date?

Medieval

- how can the extensive areas of ridge and furrow contribute to our understanding of the arrangement and development of the medieval landscape?
- how can the arrangement of manorial estates and lesser estates contribute to our understanding of the arrangement of the landscape?

Post-medieval and 20th century/ modern

- to what extent did the expansion of the mineral extractive industry, beyond the immediate area of activity, influence or change the arrangement of the landscape?

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